lang="en">

The Black Knight Who Was Stronger Than Even the Hero - WN Chapter 00-21

Table of Contents

1. Prologue
2. Chapter 1
3. Chapter 2
4. Chapter 3
5. Chapter 4
6. Chapter 5
7. Chapter 6
8. Chapter 7
9. Chapter 8
10. Chapter 9
11. Chapter 10
12. Chapter 11
13. Chapter 12
14. Chapter 13
15. Chapter 14
16. Chapter 15
17. Chapter 16
18. Chapter 17
19. Chapter 18
20. Chapter 19
21. Chapter 20
22. Chapter 21

Prologue

Teaser – The Black Knight Who Was Stronger than Even the Hero Prologue

・In a certain forest, in a certain empire, in a certain world

――――――――GUOOOOOOOOOOH*

A roar loud enough to shake the earth resounded.

“Captainnn!”

A group of soldiers a little distance away from the roar.

There stood robed magi with long staves, archers holding up their bow, armed swordsmen who appeared to be experienced veterans, and knights riding their horses.

They were members of the Imperial Army, a unit under the direct control of the Imperial Family.

Amongst them, one knight urged his horse forward while raising his voice.

The knight had short, light brown hair, and on his well-featured face ran a scar down his left cheek; this just furthered his impression of strength.

His body was slender and tall, and he looked about midway through his twenties.

Dressed in shining silver platemail and a blue mantle, he raced forward on the light brown horse that was his beloved steed.

“So it’s you, Conrat. How’s the situation?”

From inside the headquarters appeared a knight covered from head to toe in jet black plate armour, along with an armet and a bright red mantle.

They were riding a creature that resembled a black horse with horns, different to other horses, a one-horned-beast《unicorn》.

This knight was the squad captain and knight captain of this unit… the unit of

the Imperial Army that directly served the Imperial Family.

Their subordinates referred to them as Squad Captain.

The black knight spoke to the scarred man… spoke to Conrat, and asked him in a *man's* voice about the situation.

"Sir! During the ogre subjugation, a red dragon suddenly appeared! The ogre subjugation mission was completed, but three magi are currently spreading a barrier to protect against the red dragon's attacks. However, it's just a matter of time…"

Conrat promptly reported the situation.

"…Casualties?"

"Three swordsmen had their bones broken during the ogre subjugation. Because of the red dragon, knights and archers; a total of five people were burnt."

"…In other words, besides you and the magi, everybody is injured huh…? Hahhh~"

For this time's ogre subjugation, three magicians, archers, swordsmen, and knights; a total of twelve people were sent.

The unit had decided that given their strength, this number would be sufficient, and sent Vice-Squad Captain Conrat just in case, but because of the entrance of an irregular, the situation underwent a full turn.

Because everyone but Conrat and the magi were unable to move for their injuries, Conrat had left the mages in charge of defence and quickly went to ask the black knight who served as squad captain to reinforce them.

And in the midst of all this, the black knight sighed, fed up.

"Squad Captain! Please don't sigh in such a situation!"

Conrat spoke to that black knight in impatience.

And little wonder.

Normally, even with the mobilisation of the army, it was hard to tell whether or not you could take a dragon down.

Until Conrat had met this black knight, he was known as the Empire's strongest, possessing enough skill to climb the ranks of the military despite being a haphazard man, but even he would only barely be able to keep a dragon company for a few minutes at best.

It would be stranger for him not to be impatient.

"Aahh~ sorry about that. I was just thinking 'I wonder if things will hurry up and finish today without me having to do anything~?', you see. I was just thinking, 'It'd sure be nice to hurry home and take a bath, huh~' you know?"

"…You were thinking about something like that?"

Unlike their strict tone from earlier, the black knight was now speaking in a fairly carefree and casual tone.

It seems that this was their real self.

And there Conrat was, astounded by his superior.

And just where had the tension of the surrounding subordinates gone?

Completely swept away by the black knight's pace, Conrat's calm returned as well.

"Right. The first time I met you, you were like this too, weren't you?"

"It's my strong point."

"…Please don't say that so proudly."

————————Hahahahahaha

Watching the back and forth between their superiors, the subordinates regained their calm and laughed.

"Well then, I'll be going. Conrat, I'll leave the rest to you~"

"Like I said, please take things more seriously, Squad Captain!"

"It's fine, it's fine, I've trained them so their magic barriers won't break that easily."

"…"

The moment they heard these words, everybody could assent.

Ever since this black knight had come, the contents of their training had undergone a huge change, and they began gaining strength with shocking speed.

Strong enough that a troll that would be a match for five people could be taken down by one of them alone.

“Well then, let’s go, Hayate.” (hayate = gale)

“Bbbrr!” (←horse sounds)

The black knight mounted the jet black unicorn, Hayate, and just like it’s name, like a gale it ran forward with a speed impossible for a horse.

..*

・***A certain distance away from the encampment***

There a massive 10m dragon with bright red wings was spouting flames, and burning up trees left and right.

At this dangerous place stood three magi, desperately maintaining a barrier, and protecting the injured.

“Squad Captain~! Hurry up and come~!”

“Idiottt! This isn’t the time to be saying that!”

“Stop cryingg! I want to cry as welll!”

All of them were already crying.

The barrier was completely spread and they could hold on for plenty longer but because they were seeing the dragon up close, there was no way that they were not afraid.

As a bonus, they were all between the ages of 15 and 30; in other words, youths.

These youths were desperately holding on while awaiting the arrival of their squad captain, the black knight.

And then,

“Dark Shot!”

“GUGYAHHHHHH!”

The moment they heard a voice from behind them, a black mass hit the red dragon dead on.

The dragon raised a shriek, and was blown backwards.

“Sorrysorry, I was late.”

Hearing that voice with no tension, and at the same time spotting a certain person’s appearance, “”””””””” SCHKWARD KYAPTAAN~! (Squad Captain~!)””””””””””

They turned their faces, stained with tears and mucous, towards the black knight who had appeared atop his steed, Hayate.

Seeing this, the black knight,

“…Was it that scary?”

accidentally asked this.

Seeing their faces, Hayate cringed.

“Of course~! We thought we would die~!!”

screamed a girl in tears, one of the magi.

The other members nodded in agreement.

“Haahh~ From what I can see, your barrier can still hold for ages, so isn’t there nothing to be that afraid of? And also, in magic both your mana and spirit have to be strong, so don’t get so frightened by just a dragon. If you just get used to it, something like this is no big deal.”

“”””””””” Please don’t group our spirits together with that bold spirit of yours!”

Verily.

“My my… Well then, you guys can still hold up a barrier, right?”

“Eh-? Ah-, yes!”

Completely changed from their joking tone from earlier, the black knight addressed the magus in a strong tone.

The black knight gazed at the red dragon who had at some point gotten up and was glaring this way.

The atmosphere of the palce changed, and all of the subordinates withdrew their tears.

So that they wouldn't overlook what was about to happen next.

The black knight descended from their partner, Hayate.

"Hayate, you stay here too."

Hayate obediently obeyed the words of their master.

The black knight drew near the dragon.

It was an action that would usually be seen as nothing but suicidal.

However, nobody tried to stop it.

Rather, there was no need to stop it.

"GRRRRRRRRRR"

The dragon let out a threatening cry at the approaching black knight, and looked like it was about to attack at any moment.

"…"

In response, the black knight stopped at a place a little distance from the dragon, and holding with their left hand the scabbard of a black uchigatana that couldn't even be found in this world whilst resting their right hand along the grip, they lowered their body in a stance that seemed like the would move at any second.

It was the stance for battoujutsu.

The knight and dragon glared at each other.

Hayate and the subordinates just watched.

It felt like a long time had passed, but in fact it hadn't been long.

It only felt that long because of the deathly silence.

And suddenly things spelled the end for that silence.

Both parties stomped off the ground at the same time.

The next instant.

“…”

————————DOSA-!

The black knight had drawn his katana in an instant.

From the pitch black blade trickled red blood.

The dragon just stayed in the posture it used to attack, and with it’s head gone, it slowly collapsed, **————————DOSSHINN!**

and fell to the ground with a huge noise.

The first sound was the noise of the knight cutting off the dragon’s head and sending it flying, and the massive head falling to the ground.

After confirming that the dragon had fallen, the black knight removed the blood with a swing of their blade, and returned it to their scabbard with a click.

The moment the sword was sheathed, the sense of tension that had enveloped the surroundings disappeared, and the breaths that had stopped without anyone knowing were exhaled as the subordinates began to breath again.

They calmed down after taking deep breaths for a while, but then belatedly began to become excited about what they had just seen.

“Amazingg!”

“Squad Captain killed a dragon that even the military might not be able to beat!”

“And by themself!”

“When did they draw their sword!? I didn’t see a thing!”

“As expected of the Squad Captain!『The Empire’s Strongest Black Knight』isn’t just for show, huh!”

Forgetting their wounds, they were all excited.

While this happened, the black knight hadn’t taken a single step.

Hayate who had approached the dark knight drew its horn towards them, and did something.

The subordinates made a fuss for a while longer before, “Squad Captainnn! Are

you all right!?”

“Ah-! The Vice-Squad Captain!”

Conrat’s voice sounded out behind them.

When they turned around, they found Conrat racing their way with a number of knights in tow.

“Aahh~, thanks, but you’re late…”

The black knight had returned to normal.

“…”

However, Conrat did not miss the change in his superior.

More important than anything was that Hayate’s horn showed signs of magic, and it was clear that he had done something.

Conrat had dismounted his horse, and leaving the dragon and the wounded to his subordinates, he approached the black knight.

“…Where were you injured?”

“…My right ribs… 2, or 3 of them are broken.”

Right; this was why the black knight had not moved.

The moment the dragon’s head was sent flying, its forelimb struck the knight’s right side.

Had it been a normal person, they probably would have died that instant.

And Hayate had realised this.

Hayate’s horn had healing properies, and had treated the black knight with the magic in it horn.

“…Sorry.”

“? Why are you apologising?”

Suddenly being apologised to, the black knight was lost.

“I know that you can defeat a dragon, but in Eldoa, you are the only one who can do that. As a result, we always end up depending on you. Even today, you

should have originally been resting in base from your previous mission. Even though you should have been recuperating, you said “Yes yes, that’s-” …Squad Chief?”

The black knight stopped Conrat from speaking.

“I came out on the mission this time because I have my responsbilities as a squad captain. And lately, the monsters and demons have been becoming active. After I fought the demon king to a draw in single combat 2 years ago, they did pull back and our two sides have been glaring at each other since then, but it wouldn’t be strange even if they did take action.”

Indeed, this black knight had the ability to fight on par with the king of demons, the demon king.

Because of that, they would subjugate a dragon on their own.

“The demons won’t wait forever either. That’s why until then, I want to gain as much actual combat experience as possible. And on top of that, there are still many in the army that need the help of people like you and I. Them getting stronger is very important to the military after all, and most important of all is that I want them all to stay alive, so for that sake, even if it’s reckless I’ll do it again and again.”

“…”

Conrat had stayed quiet and listened to the black knight talk.

To the words of this small black knight who was younger than he was.

“Conrat, the military can become endlessly strong. One day when the war with the demons start, these guys will probably be fighting alongside forces from other nations. So that they have as few sacrifices as possible, right now we need to give them lots of experience.”

“(Aah, so this person has thought that far.)”

Hearing things that he hadn’t considered in the slightest, Conrat once again realised that he was not a match for this black knight.

“So to that end, won’t you lend me a hand, Conrat? I have limits too.”

The black knight looked straight at Conrat through the armet.

Conrat stiffened his face and replied.

“It’s not something that you need to ask. I shall follow you! I pledged this four years ago, after all.”

“…Thanks.”

Conrat smiled at the black knight’s words.

And suddenly, Conrat recalled a certain matter.

“Speaking of which, did you know?”

“Mn? Know what?”

“About a week ago, the at the Temple in the Holy Kingdom, the hero summoning was performed and a silver-haired, blue-eyed, beautiful youth was summoned.”

“…… (Eh-… It wouldn’t be)”

“If I remember correctly, this name was Yuusuke-dono… Squad Captain?”

He couldn’t see their expression because of the armet, but the black knight’s mood had clearly dropped below freezing point.

“…Nah, nothing.”

“? And so, I’ll be heading to our subordinates, so please rest up.”

Having said that, Conrat walked over to their subordinates.

The black knight trudged away from where their subordinates could see then, and into the shade of a tree.

And then they removed the armet that they would absolutely never remove in public.

What appeared was something that would never be seen in this world; with a long, black ponytail, and a common, black-eyed oriental face that was likewise nowhere to be found in this world, was the figure of a woman between the late half of her teens, and the early half of her twenties.

She held her head in her hands as she crouched down.

Hayate watched on, worriedly.

“Aaahh~ I forgot~”

That voice was not the *male* voice from before, but was just like her appearance, the voice of a woman.

“Why did I forget…? No, I guess I wanted to forget. He’s finally here; that harem eroge protagonist…”

Thinking about what to do from now on, her head began to hurt.

…*

To be continued.

Chapter 1

Teaser – The Black Knight Who Was Stronger than Even the Hero
Chapter 1 – A Melancholy Day and a Magic Circle

・Morning, 7:30, a certain house in modern Japan

“Chii! Let’s go to school~!”

……

On top of being so noisy this early in the morning, why are you coming to get me like it’s the most natural thing in the world?

Speaking of which, what’s with that nickname? Are you in primary school?

I’m Saitou Chie.

I was named Chie(智慧; wisdom) in the hopes that I would grow up to be a woman who was aware of the world, and who had the insight to see the truth of things.

I’m a plain 17 year old girl in my second year at a high school near my house.

…Even saying it myself makes me sad.

I have shoulder length black hair, and single-fold black eyes; something common in Japan.

My face is neither beautiful, nor ugly.

It’s a truly normal face.

I’m 165cm, so I’m on the tall side for a girl.

My hobbies are appreciating anime and manga, browsing fantasy cellphone-novels, playing games, and collecting model swords.

I think you can tell from just this much, but I’m an otaku.

Or so I say, but I don’t collect figurines, nor do I want to cosplay.

I just do what I like.

My specialty is survival.

I'm an indoor type, but my parents and older brother like survival, so they often bring me mountain climbing.

Thanks to that, my studies are normal, but I have more confidence in my physical strength than average.

Leaving my hobbies and specialty aside, I'm just a plainer-than-average high school girl.

However, I have a childhood friend who isn't normal.

He's,

"Chii!"

the owner of the voice that's shouting at me from the other side of the genkan.

His name is Takasugi Yuusuke.

He's the same age as me.

Short black hair and smart, black eyes.

As for his face, he's a super ikemen; enough that you can't think of it as anything but a mystery.

His grades keep him consistently top place in our grade, and his physical abilities are above average as well.

He doesn't belong to any clubs, but just seeing it once is enough for him to do anything well.

Honestly speaking, he's a monster.

He has a gentlemanly personality, and is softhearted.

Amongst his own sex, he has a lot of trust.

Before anyone noticed, he had created a harem, and even though things went as far as a fanclub for him in our school, he's a dull bastard that has no idea.

He's a real life eroge protagonist.

I'll say this just in case, but I have absolutely, not even a single, tiny grain of

romantic interest in him.

On the contrary, I'm sick of him.

You'll immediately see why.

"Haha, that guy never misses a morning, hey?"

My older brother Masato spoke sleepily from behind me, still in blue pajamas.

I'm his younger sister so you may be unsure about me saying this, but my brother is handsome enough that you wouldn't think that we're related.

He's blonde and has a mean look like a delinquent, but he's a kind older brother in his first year of university.

"He does this every single time, you know…"

In the genkan, I tied my hair into a ponytail, put on my navy, long-sleeved sailor fuku and skirt that didn't quite reach the knees, put on black knee socks and brown loafers, and stood there with a fed up expression.

"Aahh~, I get the feeling that I shouldn't head out the door right now."

"I reckon. I had a look outside the window just now, but as usual there are five cute girls with him."

"GEH-"

The number increased by one.

What kind of stupid woman is it this time?

This is one of the reasons.

This guy comes to my house every day with harem in tow.

"Haah~ …I'll be going."

"Try your best today as well~"

Resigning myself, with my schoolbag and the shoe bag with my indoor slippers, I headed outside the house.

Towards the first step of my melancholy day.

The moment I left the house, I saw him.

“Ah-, she’s come out! Chii!”

Yuusuke who was wearing his well-fit gakuran spoke with a splendid smile.

It’s a refreshing smile that probably fells any woman with certainty.

It’s not a face you should make while your harem is letting out a vicious aura behind you.

The first step of my melancholy day… Going to school with my childhood friend and his harem.

“You’re slow!”

“What the heck are you doing!?”

From early in the morning, I get showered with complaints.

“Yuusuke-senpai~ Why are you friends with such a plain girl~!?”

Said the cute, probably younger girl, on our very first meeting.

Hey you, that’s not something you would normally say to someone on your first meeting, right?

I’d like to see your parent’s faces…

“Saki-chan, don’t say something like that. Chii is my childhood friend.”

“If you say so senpai, I’ll bear with it~”

————————Squeeze!

The girl named Saki said this as she clung to Yuusuke’s right arm.

Seeing this, the harem,

“Hey, what are you doing!?”

“Yuu-kun is mineee!”

began fighting for Yuusuke.

I wish they would just cut out doing that in front of people’s houses.

“Haah~ I’m not going to wait for you.”

Saying that, I left them behind and started walking ahead.

If I waited with them, I'd be late.

"Ah~! Wait up, Chii!"

"Then walk faster."

I spoke while walking.

"Chii!"

"…What?"

"Good morning!"

"Yes, yes, good morning~"

While feeling fed up, I replied to Yuusuke.

All while feeling painful stares behind my back.

..*

..*

..*

・At a certain school.

While being completely irritated by the noisy crowd behind me, I arrive at school.

However, my melancholy speeds up.

The second step of my melancholy day… The glares and harassment from the Yuusuke Fanclub.

The instant that I pass through the school gates, I'm stabbed by unpleasant stares.

They're the threatening glares from the Yuusuke Fanclub.

Over half the girls in this school belong to the Yuusuke Fanclub, and in fact, the girls who come to school with Yuusuke each morning belong to this club.

That Saki girl was probably promoted by the management yesterday.

However, Yuusuke the man in question is ultra dense, so he has no idea this club even exists.

Of course, he has no idea about the girls' love either.

Even though they're approaching him *that* obviously.

As a result, even though they stick to him like glue he doesn't dislike it, and thinks of it as skinskip, and I'm sick of Yuusuke as a result.

If he wasn't my childhood friend, I would want nothing to do with him.

But, for some reason Yuusuke has always followed me around, and worries about me for some reason.

The result of that, is *this*.

I'm being bullied by the Yuusuke Fanclub of this school.

That's the reason that I always bring my indoor slippers home with me.

Because of various things that have happened to me since primary school, I absolutely never leave my belongings at school.

Yuusuke hasn't noticed this at all.

The members of the fanclub put in effort to cleverly hide this, and the teachers don't know about this either.

More important than anything, I don't discuss this with the main cause, and even if I did it'd be pointless.

This is him we're talking about, so,

"There's no way they'd do something like that. They're all nice girls, you know?"

is obviously going to be his reply!

In the past when I told him to do something about his harem, "Eh? I haven't created a harem or anything, you know? And they're all nice girls, so I'm sure you'll get along with them too, Chii!"

is what he told me, refreshingly.

This guy can't doubt people, so he doesn't see the things around him at all.

And he really doesn't notice his fans' dreamy and passionate gazes, or the jealous gazes from a certain number of the boys either.

I seriously can’t handle it anymore.

I entered the school building, changed to my indoor slippers, put my loafers in my bag, and headed to class.

Of course, while all this was happening, Yuusuke was following behind me.

..*

..*

..*

・After some time has passed; after school

Presently, it’s one of those rare times when I’m going home together with only Yuusuke.

It seems that the harem can’t go home because of their club activities.

They’re probably actually gathering to discuss how to deal with me.

Up until now I’ve been called out to suspicious places, had people try to push me down stairs, and received various harassment, but because of my natural reflexes they ended without huge incident, but I seriously wish they would cut it out already.

And with no idea any of this is happening, my childhood friend who is like a god of misfortune to me only, is happily walking beside me, all smiles.

“You seem pretty happy, huh…”

“Mmn, because it’s been a long time since I’ve been able to slowly spend time with you, Chii.”

I want to hurry up and go home!

“Heyy, let’s go to a café! I’ll treat you to cheesecake which you like!”

“I obviously don’t wa-Don’t just go “*Let’s go then*“! Listen to me! Don’t pull on my arm~!”

Yuusuke ignored my unwillingness, and overbearingly brought me to a nearby café.

I seriously want to go home!

..*

..*

..*

・After some more time has passed; at a park with few people

I’m following behind Yuusuke and taking a stroll in the park.

Honestly, because the sun has almost set, there’s absolutely no one in the park.

“Hey, you have not a *single bit* of restraint towards me, do you…?”

“Eh? But Chii, you like the cheesecake there, right?”

“I do but, *you know*?”

I wanted to go home, you know!

“Then isn’t it fine? You never agree to go out and have fun with me after all.”

“Liiiike IIIIII saaaaaid, it’s because your harem glares at me!”

“Hey, it’s not something as exaggerated as a harem, you know?”

Yuusuke spoke about it like it was absolutely nothing at all.

He’s speaking for real, which is why it’s just way too unpleasant.

“And moreover, they’re really all nice girls, you know?”

They’re just acting nice, you know!

Honestly, maidens in love are terrifying…

But I have absolutely no sympathy for them.

Even now, I’m being completely harassed by them after all.

“Hahhh… Seriously, you’ll meet some harsh times one day, you know?”

“What the heck is this!?”

Having stopped walking, without giving a single glance to Yuusuke, I lectured him.

Even if I say all this, it’s probably pointless, but I can’t let it go unsaid.

I get the feeling that he's saying something, but I pay it no mind.

"Uwahh~ It's pulling me in!!"

"It's because you're like this that one day you'll get backstabbed, you know. Even if you don't yo-, "*Save me Chii!*"? Are you listening to m-…e-…"

Having judged that he wasn't listening, I turned to face Yuusuke.

What's with this scene?

Looking like it appeared right below Yuusuke was something like a shining magic circle.

No, that's definitely a magic circle.

Everything below the stomach was buried into the magic circle, and having somehow or other moved to the edge of the magic circle, Yuusuke was desperately clinging on.

While gazing at this scene, I calmly analysed it.

O Yuusuke, having been dissatisfied with just being the protagonist of a Romance Game (18+), this time you even want to experience being the protagonist of a Fantasy World RPG?

"Aahh~ But I did get the feeling that this would happen one day…"

"What are you assenting to on your own!? Hurry up and help pull me out!!"

Don't ask the impossible.

Despite looking skinny, he's a 175cm guy with a fairly muscled build, and is impossible for a woman like me to pull up.

If I think about it more carefully, if only he wasn't here, wouldn't I be able to live a peaceful life?

There'd no longer be a reason for the girls in the harem or fanclub to harass me any further.

Moreover, it's obvious at a glance that Yuusuke is being summoned as a hero.

He probably won't be treated badly.

That's why there's only one option I should take.

“Yuusuke.”

“Chii, hurry!”

“This magic circle is probably a hero summoning. Isn’t that great? You’ve been chosen as the hero who will protect the people. Be a good kid and save lots of people in the other world.”

“Chii! What are you talking about!?”

Yuusuke’s face paled, as though in despair.

I pretended not to see, and turned my back on him.

“Well then, try your best, childhood friend of mine!”

I spoke with a smile.

With this, my days of peace have come!

However, the next instant.

———————GASHI-!

“Heh?”

My leg was suddenly caught.

“Then you come too, Chii!!”

Without any time to think about what he had just done to me, I was sucked into the magic circle along with Yuusuke by a strong force.

It seems that there really is no peace for me.

I want to knock Yuusuke flying…

..*

To be continued

Chapter 2

To clarify: I, AFlappyTeddyBird do not speak a hint of Japanese. Everything that is posted here will be translated by my friend **KK_Akatsuki** who kindly allows me to publish these. These translations are rather roughly edited, and translations happen very sporadically, sometimes it could be 1 chapter in a month, sometimes it could be 4 or anything in between, just don't have high expectations about punctuality. I will try to do my best to edit the chapters so that they're not unpleasant to read, but I do sometimes struggle with re-forming sentences.

Chapters 0&1: https://oniichanyamete.wordpress.com/%E8%A6%8Bsc%EF%BD%83%E3%82%8 black-knight-who-was-stronger-than-even-the-hero/

And now without further ado, Chapter 02:

Raw: http://ncode.syosetu.com/n2388bg/3/

Chapter 2: Takamagahara(Land of the Higher gods) and the Sun god

"Ufun…"

"Ara, have you awoken, Chie-san…"

…….

I woke up in a room that that had the same style as an old chinese drama movie. I saw a young beautiful woman wearing a luxurious looking kimono with an expensive looking robe(hagoromo). A really big woman.

Why is she so big?

"Let me introduce myself to you. I am known as the god of the sun here in Takamagahara, Amaterasu-o-okamisama."

……

Eh?

Amaterasu-o-okamisama of Takamagahara.

“Amaterasu-o-okamisama, the chief god of Takamagahara that in Japanese mythology? The deified god of the sun?”

“Ara, you really know it well.”

Seriously!?

Why is the chief god of japanese mythology in front of my eyes!?

I know cause its a name of a well known god!? (t/l note: I don’t know how to make this into a question, LOL) “Well~ it’s expected to be confused after all. For now, come here.”

To say it in simple terms, I was scooped up by the hand of Amaterasu-o-okamisama.

What’s up with this situation?

I can’t feel my body or anything else.

While I was confused, I was placed on a wooden circular object in front of the chair of Amaterasu-o-okamisama sat on.

“First of all, you have died.”

‘… seriously?’

I was suddenly told something outrageous.

With a refreshing smile at that.

I had an idea as to why though.

“The reason is well, I think you already know. It was because you were caught up with Yuusuke-kun.”

“I knew it was that idiot’s fault.”

As always.

That pest!(t/l: it’s jinx in the original) “Yes, as a hero of Erudoa, he was supposed to have been summoned alone. Your body was destroyed because you were caught. So I hurriedly picked up your soul.”

While saying that, Amaterasu-o-okamisama hoisted a hand mirror from her bosom and turned it to me.

What was reflected there, was a palm sized round sparkling object.

It was the shape of a soul.

She looked large because I was small.

I was already shocked countless times that I wasn't surprised by this.

"I am very sorry to have troubled you Amaterasu-o-okamisama."

"You may call me Amaterasu."

Ah, as expected of a god.

How divine.

And also very friendly.

"Don't mind it, I also have a proposal for you."

"Eh?"

Proposal?

What could it be?

"I can place your soul into another body and go to the world of Erudoa."

Eh?

What does she mean?

"I actually have a very good relationship with the Elk god, as Tea drinking friends. He's also the god of the world that summoned Yuusuke-kun."

"Please wait a minute! You can interact with the gods of the other world!?"

"Ehh(yes), crossing over to different worlds is easy for a god."

I was replied to with a smile.

"To say as a god, you need to have a god's divine blessing to pass through the gate of another world. Or else your body and soul may collapse, almost like you." (t/l: don't ask me about the first phrase. It said 'to itte kami ka' which literally means 'to say god') What?

If Amaterasu-sama didn't pull away my soul, it would've been destroyed!

If I hadn't been patient with Yuusuke, I would have already kicked his butt…

“Hearing you say that, because my body passed through that magic circle without my permission, I became an irregular in that summoning and because of that my body was destroyed, correct?”

“As I expected, you managed to understand it fast.”

I became happy cause I managed to impress Amaterasu-sama.

Well, I am already used to gasping what was happening. (Alternatively: Well, I’m already used to reading the atmosphere.) “The one who chose him was me, because he’s dense, he won’t suspect anybody, to a point where it seems like he’s not looking at anybody at all, was a result of my previous investigation. More than anyone would expect, I as a god of the earth, cannot simply watch what was happening in the other world. We, the gods of old, kept contact with each other. The gods of Olympus and Takamagahara who live here on earth.” (The last phrase was hard to reword… LOL) Ah, that means gods live in a world populated by other gods, like how we humans live in a world with other humans.

And the gods of the other world aren’t able to intervene with the gods that manage this world.

The gods of the other world won’t know what to do if the hero summoning failed. (t/l: Yuusha = Brave hero = pain to write for me so I only wrote hero, LOL) They could only call a person who has the divine blessing of the gods.

And the chosen one this time is that idiot, Yuusuke.

Probably the reason why I’m here is because I’m now only existing as a soul.

“The gods of Erudoa cannot interfere with the lower world. If I left your friend to that world alone, I would get anxious if everything was alright.”

“Yes, I know what you mean.”

I understand because we’ve been friends for years.

“He will continue raising up romance flags everywhere and I’m sure most of his party members would probably be all pretty girls. He’ll have the men’s trust cause he’s easy to get along with, he’ll also be the person who’ll be directed with the most jealousy because of it. He won’t even notice it. It’s cause he’s a naive and trusting person! He’ll be used and deceived by those in power. What they’re

doing is not for world peace!!!”

Wouldn’t it rather make it worse?

I’m somehow becoming anxious…

“Yeah, now that I think about it I may have made a mistake in choosing that human Amaterasu-sama was now regretting what she did in her head.

Well, he’s almost perfect because of his monstrous looks and great physical abilities.

“That where I have something to talk to you about.”

“… don’t tell me.”

I have a bad feeling about this.

“Let’s not care about the hero right now. Please defeat the Maou!”

It has come!!! (Soo Kita ka-!!)

“I will transfer you into a body I made. It will be look the same as the original so you won’t feel any discomfort from it. With my divine blessing, you will have equal or greater physical and magical power with the hero. Even if you will suddenly fight against the Maou, you will still be equal to him. Of course you will need to obtain the knowledge, language and common sense of that world. You will be able to read and write their words. Also, I will make you a sword and armor just for you!!!”

She prepares fast. (e/n: She moves fast.) Well, it’s her friends world, so she feels responsible for it.

This god apparently treasures her friends deeply.

“Besides you’re still too young. I can’t send you back to your original world, so living in a different world is the only way…. I’m so sorry, it’s because I missed the timing.”

I see, so she was thinking about me.

Then I won’t refuse her offer.

It seems like I’m also a good-natured person.

“Alright, I’ll accept your offer.”

“Really!? Thank you very much! Then let’s start right away by transferring you into your new body.”

After talking with Amaterasu-sama, we then moved to another room.

On the bed inside the room, a person who could’ve been mistaken as me laid there.

The person was wearing some plain clothing with western-like fantasy designs and wore some light brown boots.

“Trousers for easier movement. The reason why it’s black is because it suits you the most.”

It’s really easy to move in.

It was in the color I liked.

I was really thrilled because I like fantasy and I was about to go to a fantasy world.

Amaterasu-sama then placed me on the body.

Then I entered it.

“……..”

“How do you find it?”

I rose up and tried to move my neck, arms and feet around.

Nothing felt out of place.

“Everything feels alright.”

I stood next to Amaterasu-sama.

We looked about the same.

“That’s good. So, here’s your weapons and armor.”

I looked at what she handed me.

……..

“It’s black.”

“Ara, then please forgive me if you don’t like it. I thought that it was perfect for you.”

“No, well, I think it’s good…”

I was given a dark shiny plate mail and helmet.

It looked like a black knight that appears in games.

Beside it was a black sword handle and sheath that had the same design.

This made me really happy.

“Uwaah! I really love Katanas!!!”

I softly pulled it out from the sheath.

The blade had a beautiful obsidian color.

But it’s still black…

“The name of the sword is “Sakuya(Tsuitachi Yoru)” and is a holy sword I made just for you.”

“Holy Sword?”

It looks more like a demon sword than a holy sword.

“That katana, unlike Yuusuke-kuns ‘Dynamis’ can’t emit sword pressure, which can blow away things and cut through dragons with ease. Its sheath has the ability to create a barrier and render the attack of even the demon lord useless. Though your sword looks like a demon sword, it does possess the attribute of divinity ”

It’s somehow really amazing.

Heck, does Dynamis’ the difference between the power of the sword and the sheath have any meaning at all?

Like hidden potential of the sword?

No not that, Yusuke’s holy sword’s ‘Sword Pressure’ seems like it can do anything.

What a cheat.

“A, this ‘Sakuya’ is sharper than ‘Dynamis’ and can cut its ‘Sword Pressure’.”

……

My sword was also a cheat.

“Ah, also, nobody other than you can use the sword, Chie-san and in its dormant state, none other than you can carry it.”

“… Ah, so that it can’t be used for evil right?”

“Yes, that’s right.”

I see.

Certainly, if a strong weapon like this is used, it would be really troublesome.

“Now for the explanation of the armor. When you done this armor, you won’t feel it’s weight. You’ll also be protected from heat, cold and any kinds of attacks. You will never be injured.”

“Then, what if its crushed?”

“Nothing will happen to it.”

She spoke with a smile.

The armor was also a cheat.

“But you’ll receive damage if you’re in the air. It’s because the way the armor protects you is by transferring the shockwaves to the ground.”

That’s convincing.

No matter how much of a cheat it is, it’s not almighty.

“Also, attacks from a dragon, ancient demon, and maou that also destroys the ground you stand increases the risk of injuring your flesh from powerful attacks.”

“What would happen to me then?”

“Instant death.”

……..

That’s really dangerous.

Well, everything will be alright if I use the sheathe well.

“There’s also a red magic stone that’s embedded in the eyes of the helmet and

acts as an magical power supply for it. GIving you the ability to see in the dark and change your voice at will.”

“Change the voice?”

It had such a function?

“Yes, I was wondering if you’d want to hide your true identity, it is a dangerous world after all. Also the boots have a secret that will increase your height by 5 cm.”

“Ah, I see!”

That’s right, I can’t just introduce myself as a girl and its also important to hide information against the enemy.

Amaterasu-sama told me that the average height of women in Erudoa is 150 – 170 cm while for boys it was 170 – 190 cm.

I’m 165 cm, so if I wear the armor my height becomes 170 cm. It’s not even funny/weird to be a woman and have the same height as a man.

Also, if I wore the armor, they won’t be able to judge whether I’m a woman or a man. It’s a perfect way to hide my identity.

“So it’s better if I’m not found out over there then.”

“That would be for the best. You already stand out there cause you’re a person from earth, its rare for Erudoa to have any people that comes from the orient. They don’t have anyone that has black hair and black eyes over there.”

That’s also good to know.

“Thanks, I’ll be careful then.”

“For now, please touch the ‘Sakuya’ and the armor.”

I touch them as I was told.

The ‘Sakuya’ and the armor dissolved into a mist and gathered in my right wrist.

When the haze disappeared, a silver bracelet with a black stone embedded on its center appeared in its place.

“That’s its dormant state. You only need to imagine it strongly if you ever decide to wear it and the same goes if you want to remove it.”

“Umm, why is it a black haze?”

“That’s because your elemental affinity is the darkness attribute.”

Ah, I have the darkness attribute.

“You can create your own magic based on your imagination.”

That’s helpful.

Honestly, even if knowledge is presented to you, learning about it is hard.

“Then, before you go, please wear the armor.”

I then imagined myself wearing the armor.

A black mist covered me and became an armor.

The ‘Sakuya’ also dangled on my waist.

I really didn’t feel the weight.

“My~ you’ve turned into a splendid black knight.”

“Is that so?”

It feels like I’m cosplaying and is very embarrassing.

“I’ll gonna open the gate now. Also, here’s my gift to you, its the currency of the other world.”

I was given a brown bag that contained money.

What the.

Its quite heavy.

As I was thinking that, Amaterasu-sama waved her hand to open the gate.

It somehow looked like space was being twisted.

“I’ll be sending you to the time four years before the holy kingdom summoned a hero, at the capital of an empire. From what I’ve heard from the Elk god, it’s a country where the emperor likes to gather those who are strong so I think you’ll be safe there. That’s a place I would like to recommend for you to live in. You can

also use the four years time to increase your knowledge and strengthen your body.”

“I understand.”

“This is as far as I’m able to cooperate with you. Then, Black Knight Chie, may the fortunes of war be with you.”

“Hai, Amaterasu-sama.”

I jumped into the gate.

I will now live in a new world.

Chapter 3

So here's Chapter 3. Chapter 2 has been done for a few weeks now, that Chapter 3 has been released so soon after Chapter 2 is an extraordinarily special occurence, don't get your hopes up!

Translated by **KK_Akatsuki**
Edited by me.

Raw: http://ncode.syosetu.com/n2388bg/4/

Chapter 3: Unicorns and Accidents

On the forest road to the Imperial City.

"The Emperor has called for you Knight Captain."

I was on my way to the Imperial city on a mission to escort the royal family.

While I was riding on my favorite horse, Justie, in front of the royal carriage, I received a message.

The messenger was one of my subordinates behind me.

"Understood. I'm sorry, but replace me here."

"Hai!"

I lined up with my skilled subordinates near the carriage.

There are ten people, including me, guarding the carriage.

The representative of our country was returning from a meeting with foreign countries.

"Your Majesty, I, Conrad, have arrived."

"Oh, Conrad. I'm sorry, if it's unexpected, my daughter's mood is really good. Mind if we take a break?" Said the current Emperor, James Guradosu.

He had blue eyes and a blond beard. He wore luxurious golden clothes for aristocrats and a red mantle embroidered with the royal symbol of a unicorn.

He's a man who was now 40 years old.

The reason why he asked for me was because of the princess.

Well, it was understandable.

Elene-hime was 13 years old

It was her first time going out of the country.

“Understood. We will now have a break. All soldiers, halt the advance!”

The soldiers stopped as I had instructed.

“His majesty has ordered for a break. Everyone, remain vigilant as you guard the areas you’ve been assigned.”

“““ Yes!”””

The soldiers went to guard their respective areas just as I had instructed.

The guards consist of three mages, two swordsmen, three archers and two knights.

This time, I was the Knight captain. This meant I also serve as the commander.

The carriage behind the royal carriage carried servants. We were also tasked to escort them.

Five people walked out from the carriage and quickly prepared tables, chairs and parasols.

If you look at them, they work really fast.

His Majesty, the Crown Prince and the Princess came out from the royal carriage and sat on the chairs.

As always the wife… Claire Guratosu, looks very young.

She appeared to be in her late 20s. She had hair that was bundled up and big, blue eyes. Her nose and mouth were also pretty. It’s easy to understand why she looks so young, it’s because she had no wrinkles.

She really likes her dress, which is decorated with gold embroideries.

However, unlike her appearance, she’s actually 40 years old.

I was really shocked when I first met her.

I wasn't convinced when I was told that she was of the same age as His Majesty. I felt like I was struck by lightning when I discovered that it was true.

Because she doesn't talk much, she really looked very young…

The Prince and Princess sat between the King and Queen.

Crown Prince, Chris Guratosu

Like the King, he had short blond hair with long double eyelashes and blue eyes. He wore blue aristocratic clothes and was a handsome young man.

At the young age of 15 years old, he had already practised swordsmanship with the soldiers and was also really smart.

He's 165 cm tall and he still hasn't stopped growing.

He didn't pose any problems as the heir.

Then there's also another person.

Sitting between the Crown Prince and the Queen. Princess Elene Guratosu.

A cute girl with long blond hair and big blue eyes.

The light pink dress she wore suited her very well.

We have already been troubled because of the princess' curious personality.

Even such a girl would probably get tired on her first long journey.

As expected she became quiet.

The four were very close to one another and where relaxing as maids poured tea into their cups.

Looking at this scene, they appeared to be a very close, humble family.

However, they are in fact, Royalty.

Recently the number of people that wants them dead have increased.

His majesty works really hard in politics for the people who live in the empire.

However, recently, a small part of the nobles have started moving. They frequently target the lives of the royalty.

Fortunately, the worst hasn't happened yet. However, the security of the

Empire has gotten bad because of them.

A common example are slave auctions.

Slavery was banned in the empire. Anyone would be punished without question if they were found out to possess slaves.

Yet, the number victims of human hunting kept increasing and auctions would happen in the back alleys.

I wanted to find their hideouts, however I still haven't caught their tail.

What's more, the demons have recently become more active. That has caused us to become really busy and has limited our reach.

Normally, we wouldn't have brought the Princess and the Queen to diplomatic meetings. The reason why we had to, was because we didn't know when or where they'd be attacked.

It still didn't change the fact that it was dangerous.

Actually, there was a demon attack. However, the experienced soldiers I chose didn't have much trouble.

The soldiers would even be fine if trolls and ogres came out.

Because they live on their own, they will probably only be encountered one at a time. (e/n courtesy of Tensaiz) Well, even if three demons appear, I, alone, would be enough to handle them. However, because His Majesty and the servants are here, the battle would be really tough.

Also, were only an hour away from the capital.

That was why my guard was down during this time.

———— Guo~o~o~o~o~o~o~oo!

"!? That's!"

A tremendous roar resounded nearby.

We, the soldiers, His majesty, and the maids became vigilant of our surroundings.

———— Dosso! Dosshi! Dosshi!

From the sound, I could tell that not just one, but more than two demons were approaching.

———— Dosshi!

“!…. This can’t be true!”

With an ax on their shoulders, five ogres with a height of five meters appear, causing the earth to tremble greatly.

＊＊＊＊＊＊＊＊＊＊

Rewind time a little

＊＊＊＊＊＊＊＊＊＊

I’m currently in the middle of the forest standing in front of a beautiful lake.

Also, I’m in a huge pinch.

It’s because.

“Which way’s the city?”

I don’t know in which direction to proceed, as a result, I’m stuck.

It would’ve been great if I could ask for help.

I wanted someone to tell me in which direction I should go.

Well, even I know that it’s bad, if I start walking in a dangerous direction.

……..

For now, let’s drink some water.

I squatted down near the lake and removed the jaw part of my helmet.

Actually, the jaw part of the helmet can be removed so that I won’t have any problems when I eat.

Its times like this that I hid my appearance with the armor that Amaterasu made.

I don’t want the information of my real appearance to leak to the enemy, so there might be a need to wear this armor everyday.

Because of the enchantments, I won’t feel hot or cold with this.

I won’t need to use blankets when I camp outside.

If I were to ever enter a guild, I wouldn’t need to pack many belongings on my missions.

I scooped water with my two hands as I thought of such things.

The water is really clean.

I drank the water from my hands.

It was delicious and cold.

And the air was also delicious.

I would have never been able to taste such clean air and water in my previous life in modern Japan.

I searched for any presence nearby before I made my armor into a bracelet. Leaving only ‘Sakuya’.

“Haaa~ That felt good.”

I lay on my back and spread my arms.

Somehow, I felt a sense of freedom.

Now that I think about it, I have never felt this safe in places other than my room.

Yuusuke-kun’s fanclub would harass me at school.

If I walked in the streets, I would never know when they’d attack me.

…….

It’s all that baka Yuusuke-kun’s fault!

But!

That baka Yuusuke-kun isn’t here right now!

He doesn’t yet exist in this world!

That’s really great!

I felt that I had a really big smile on my face now.

I immersed myself in this feeling for a while.

At that time.

“Hm?”

I sensed something that wasn’t there before.

However, I couldn’t feel any hostility.

By the way, the reason why I’m sensitive to presences was because of the life I had in Japan.

It gradually came closer.

It must be some kind of wild animal.

———— Kasakasa

“Eh!?”

I was surprised at the animal that emerged from behind the tree.

It was a creature that had black fur, looked like a horse and had a horn on its forehead.

Calling it divine would be the appropriate term to describe it.

……..

No, wait a minute. Just what is up with this situation?

It’s because the thing that appeared in front of my eyes was a unicorn!?

I froze up for a while.

Unicorn.

Those were creatures that only appeared in legends back on Earth.

They were recorded to have looked like white horses possessing a sharp horn.

They were said to have a fierce and brave personality.

An existence you wouldn’t be able to stand up to.

They were faster than any horse.

The horn was said to possess the ability to cleanse poison and cure diseases.

It was the symbol of ‘Purity’, ‘Chastity’, and also, as one of the seven deadly

sins, ‘Rage’.

They were also strangely attached to virgins.

Here in Erudoa, their personalities and characteristics didn’t change that much.

However, unlike on Earth, they weren’t attached to virgins. But to Knights that were strong enough to make them submit.

That means that that Knight would be the strongest knight. One that is adored and longed for by the world.

It’s expected that the unicorn had a lot of pride. It is said that they only choose one knight every 500 years.

He’d become a legend to the people.

There’s also something else that’s a bit different.

The unicorn that was stronger, faster, and smarter, than the white unicorn. It’s ability to purify and cure diseases was also more potent. It is said that it had the ability to restore strength and heal injury.

It’s personality is said to be calm and more prideful than the white unicorn.

However, nobody has ever seen its appearance.

And now,

the glorified and prideful black unicorn wanted to be spoiled by me..

I’ll say it again.

The black unicorn wanted to be spoiled.

It rubbed its cheeks with mine!

What’s with this situation!

I felt like my head was going to explode!

Additionally my face was contorting.

I recalled my earlier conversation with God, this felt much more realistic than that, so I was able to accept it much more easily.

For now, let’s try rubbing its neck.

“Bururuu”

It neighed happily.

How cute and calming.

“…….. Are you willing to come with me?”

When I was able to somehow say something, its horn shone brightly, so I involuntarily averted my eyes.

When the light disappeared, I saw that the black unicorn stood in front of me equipped with a harness.

Apparently, it has recognized me as its partner.

“Are you really okay with me? There may be other people who are more suitable than me.”

“Bururururururu”

The unicorn disagreed by shaking its head strongly, acting sweet with me.

I thought, “Yareyare” and started stroking its neck, making him pleased.

This was how I met my partner.

I continued stroking him for a while.

“Hey, do you know the road towards the capital?”

I tried asking him.

It’s because I wanted to leave before sunset.

The unicorn brought the stirrup closer to me.

It seems like he’s telling me to get on.

“Ah, I need to wear the armor.”

I imagined the myself wearing armor and suddenly a black haze covered my body. I was now equipped with jet black, plated armor and helmet. Sakuya was mounted on my left hip.

By the way, Sakuya was attached to me like a magnet. It was strongly stuck on

me.

As if it was saying that this is its place.

When the unicorn saw me, wearing my armor, its atmosphere changed and its eyes shone. Its pride seemed to have been satisfied.

Somehow, I felt really embarrassed.

As I was thinking of that, I placed my left foot on the stirrup and rode his back.

I was saved by the knowledge that was given to me because it also contained the knowledge on how to ride horses.

I held the reins.

“Then, let’s go the directi– waaa!”

He suddenly started running at a breakneck speed and all I could do was scream.

I was really surprised by how fast he was and was also impressed by it.

“You’re really fast! Amazing!”

“Hihin!”

It felt like he was saying, ‘Of course I am’ to me.

He didn’t lower his speed as he ran while avoiding trees. We were as fast as the wind. Kinda like a gale.

Gale.

“Alright! Your name will now be ‘Hayate’! It means gale in the words of my home country.”

“Hihin!”

It seemed that he liked it.

I could tell from his cries.

“That’s great. Take care of me, okay? Hayate!”

“Bururururuu”

“Ahahahaha, I can see light!”

“Kyaaaa~!”

A scream!?

I started feeling out for any presences. I could sense some people from the place where we were headed. I also felt these huge ominous presences.

I have a bad feeling about this.

“Faster, Hayate!”

Hayate understood my words and increased his speed.

I’m not like Yuusuke who’s a nice guy.

However, I can never abandon anyone who’s in real danger.

I didn’t want to become a hero like in some Animes and Mangas. I just didn’t want to become a heartless human.

This is not like that time with Yuusuke, where a magic circle for hero summoning suddenly appeared. I didn’t help him because I judged that it wouldn’t bring him any danger. However, this time, I clearly felt a really unpleasant feeling.

We need to hurry.

＊＊＊＊＊＊＊＊＊＊

“Guuh!”

I parried the ogre’s axe with my bastard sword.

“U~o~o~o~o~o!”

I pushed the ogre back greatly with my arm strength.

I didn’t miss the chance when the ogre’s balance broke. I jumped up at it and pierced its forehead with my sword.

“Gugagaaaaa!”

The ogre screamed as it fell.

Blood oozed from the wound on its forehead.

I stabbed the sword deeply into him to deliver the finishing blow.

I pulled the sword out the moment the ogre's eyes became white.

The ogre convulsed for a while until it stopped moving indefinitely.

Two remaining.

Corpses were lying around the two ogres.

The servants and the Royal Family were clustered together in the distance, a bit farther away.

"Haa~ Haa~ Haaa~"

Tsk!

My breathing sped up.

Looking around, I could see that my subordinates were in a state where they couldn't move.

I was the last one standing.

Damn it!

Just what was that!?

Ogres normally act alone. Its quite abnormal for five to appear at the same time.

It normally takes a party of 20 soldiers to defeat 1 ogre.

The only one who could fight against an ogre solo was me. As a result, I was called as the Empire's strongest. It was quite impossible for the others.

Lesser monsters, like goblins, and intermediate monsters, like kobolds and harpies, normally appear in groups. However, it was impossible for greater monsters, like ogres, to appear in groups.

"Just what the "Kyaaaaaa!" damn it!"

I noticed that an ogre was near the Royal family when I looked back to see why the princess screamed.

His Majesty and the Crown Prince held the ogre back with their sword as the maids and servants stood to protect the Queen and the Princess.

Though His Majesty and the Crown Prince were quite good with the sword, it

was still impossible for these two o face an ogre.

This is bad!

I’m too far away from them!

Even so, I still tried to run as fast as I could.

“Buoooooo!”

An ogre stood between us and blocked me. It seemed like they had planned it.

“Shit! Move it!”

I sliced him with the bastard sword.

But.

“Guruaaa!”

“Gaha!”

The ogre flung me away.

I landed on the ground behind me.

That was dangerous…

If this continues, His majesty will…

Looking at His Majesty’s situation, I saw that a giant axe was about to be brought down on them.

However, I couldn’t muster any strength.

No matter how much strength I tried to gather, it was all useless.

Damn it….

This isn’t a joke….

The Empire’s strongest Knight Captain is in this situation.

Knight Captain!?

Empire’s strongest!?

I’m so weak!

Please!

Somebody…

Help His Majesty!!!

—- Gucha!

“Gua… gaa!”

“Eh?”

What just happened?

A large hole suddenly appeared in the chest of the ogre that was about to attack His Majesty, and it fell on its back.

—- Ton!

“Good, I made it in time.”

I heard the sound of somebody stepping on the ground and when I looked in that direction, the low voice of a man could be heard.

My eyes then opened wide.

The one that appeared was a black knight, riding the legendary black unicorn.

This was our Empire’s… no, the meeting with the Black Knight that will change the empire.

Chapter 4

Next chapter of Black Knight!

Adjusted monster classifications. They're now: Lesser -> Intermediate -> Greater Translated by **KK_Akatsuki Smoothed over by me.**

Sorry, my editing skill really isn't that good yet. Right now this translation is pretty literal, if I find the time, I'll post another Black Knight translation, derived from this one, on another blog. That one will be edited very liberally, tho. Different vocabulary, sentence structures and types of speech and all.

Raw: http://ncode.syosetu.com/n2388bg/5/

Chapter 4 First contact

"Good thing I made it."

Hayate and I had quickly run in the direction of the scream. We found that a 5 meito ogre was about to swing his axe down on some people.

By the way, a meito is this worlds equivalent to a meter.

Incidentally, 'milimeter' is 'mimeito', 'centimeter' is 'kuameito', 'kilometer' is 'kiameito', 'gram' is 'guoa', 'kilogram' is 'kiaguoa', 'ton' is 'giga', 'liter' is 'Suo' and 'mililiter' is 'misou'.

There are also a bunch more, but these are the most commonly used.

It's really convenient to know what they are called here.

Okay, let's get back to the story.

I looked at the scene where the ogre was about to swing the axe down. I quickly asked Hayate to stop him and it seemed like he understood me. Magic started concentrating on his horn and from within the forest, he shot it like a bullet. It tore a big hole through ogre's chest..

And now, back to the present.

My voice is changed to a low, man's voice thanks to the helmet's magic crystal.

Even so, this scene is quite surprising.

Looking around, I could see pieces of the wrecked carriage and the bodies of guards lying around.

Well, they don't seem to be dead.

In comparison, four ogres have died, if we add the one that Hayate defeated.

I could see their internal organs spilling over and their blood flowing out. It really made me feel like puking.

Next, I could see a few people who seemed to be nobles and some servants huddled together in one place.

There are six horses near them.

They're the people I saved a while ago.

Lastly, a bit farther away, I saw a guy who was toppled over by an ogre, on the ground with a confused look on his face.

Looking at him from head to toe, he looked like a knight.

"I'm sorry, the person over there. Are you okay?"

I asked the knight-like person as I stepped down from Hayate and walked closer to him and the ogre.

"E?… a…"

Nn, it seems like he's still confused.

Well, I think that reaction is expected if you suddenly see a person wearing black armor, riding the legendary black unicorn.

In fact, even the people that have cowered together and those who have fallen can't keep up with the situation.

"Hayate, could you start treating those strange people? I'll do something about the other one."

"Bururu~!"

Hayate neighed once before he started healing one of them.

"Now then. Oi, Big guy!"

The ogre increased its guard as it glared at me with hostility.

As expected of a greater monster.

Unlike what its appearance suggests, it has high intelligence and won't attack recklessly.

There are always some guys like that.

"Why the hell are the five of you guys fighting against these humans~? What's more, three of you were defeated before I even arrived."

"Guru!?"

I knew it.

Their reasoning goes away once I provoke them a little bit.

"Wait! What the hell are you doing!?"

Ah, Knight-san said something.

I'm gonna ignore it and continue on.

"If I'm correct, normally, you would need 20 humans to defeat one ogre, right? What's up with this pathetic situation?"

"Gurururururu!"

Let's pause a bit.

"You ugly monster!"

"Gugugugagagagagaga!"

The ogre came rushing to me with his axe, causing the ground to shake.

Provocation, successful!

"Oi! What're you doing!? Run away!"

Knight-san desperately screamed at me. Ignore him!

I touched Sakuya with my right hand.

The ogre kept getting closer to me, before swinging its axe with a lot of momentum.

I quickly unsheathed Sakuya and parried the axe, gripping Sakuya with only

my right hand.

“Guruga!?”

Of course the ogre would be confused about what had happened.

Everyone around us opened their mouths wide.

“Yotto!”

I push back the ogre’s axe.

The ogre had to take a few steps backwards because of the force I put into it.

I hit his waist with my left hand while slashing at his shoulder, provoking him even more.

Naturally, his blood started going to his head.

“Guruaaaa!”

The ogre roared as he wielded the axe.

He swung his axe a few times.

However, the swings were easily stopped by Sakuya.

And then.

“Haa!”

Gathering my strength, I shattered the axe.

“Gururu….”

Struck by the residual force, the ogre fell on his butt.

Finally, the ogre noticed.

That I was stronger than him.

Well, it’s thanks to the body that Amaterasu-sama made, that I became this strong. Honestly speaking, I wasn’t this strong originally.

Well, let’s set that aside for now.

The ogre now looked at me with a fearful expression.

He was going to use all of his remaining strength to escape from me.

However his waist gave in.

I started talking to the ogre.

“No matter what from angle you look at it, they were the ones who were attacked. The evidence is everywhere. Pieces of broken cups and the debris of the chairs, tables and their carriage. You could see that they were attacked by you guys while they were on a break.”

I continued talking to the ogre as I walked towards him.
“As such, I can only take one action.”

Gripping Sakuya, I jumped higher than the ogre was tall.

“Because you’re the ones that attacked, I won’t accept any complaints.”

I beheaded the ogre.

Walking away from the ogre, I walked towards the fallen knight. I swung Sakuya once to remove the blood and then returned it to its scabbard.

The moment I locked Sakuya to its sheath, the ogre split into two starting from the head down.

Well, that was good for my first battle.

To get used to killing creatures, you first need to start with killing a fish you just caught, was what I thought.

Above all, I can’t stand the smell around here.

It’s also troubling if some monsters are attracted to the smell of blood.

Apart from me, who’ll be fine on my own, they’ll be in danger as a result.

I need them to start moving and leave this place quickly.

“That is?”

I suddenly noticed something.

Come to think of it, there were three bodies of killed ogres.

Like I said earlier, you normally need 20 people to defeat one ogre.

However the people who fought against them were that knight in front of me and ten other people.

While they were protecting lots of people.

What's even more surprising is that they're only injured and not one has died.

Lastly, that silver armored, blue cloaked knight.

He had short hair that was dyed brown, on his left side there was a scar extending from his forehead down to his cheek and a typical, manly face.

He really looked stunning with his reddish-brown eyes.

He seemed to be around his 20s.

He was sitting, but I could tell that he's really tall.

Come to think of it, unlike the others, he's the only one with a cloak.

That means that he should be a great person among the guards.

"N?"

I stared at the bastard sword near him.

From the blood on it, I could tell that it was used to pierce something.

When piercing, you need to be quite strong enough in order to do it properly.

Piercing…

I then look at the ogre that lay behind him.

For it to fall down like that without any visible fatal wounds at all.

That means that it was pierced in the center of his head…

Then, this man defeated the ogre alone?

I'll need to think of an explanation.

First, he, with the support of others, fought against two ogres. The other people then became exhausted after defeating those two.

As the last one standing, he fought against the three and I defeated the one ogre that attacked the frozen people over there.

Now that I understood what happened, I stopped in front of Knight-san.

I held my right hand in front of him.

“Are you alright?”

“A…. ah.”

He grabbed my right hand and gripped it strongly.

Using a bit of my right arm’s strength, I helped him stand up.

I was right. He really was very tall.

Right now, my eyes were at the level of his neck. I would be at his chest level if I removed my armor.

What I thought when I raised my head to look at him was.

‘Is this man really human?’

*****

‘What the hell just happened?’

A black knight, riding a black unicorn, suddenly appeared and defeated one ogre. Next, he started provoking another ogre and rendered his attacks useless. Lastly, he used a black sword, that I’ve never seen before, to cut the ogre in two.

‘Am I seeing a dream?’

I can also defeat an ogre alone, but doing it with brute strength like that is impossible for me.

And his reaction speed.

He didn’t move a single step and his attacks his opponents by quickly swinging his sword while only using one hand.

More importantly, is that black unicorn the real thing?

It’s confusing me even more!

And then.

“Are you alright?”

I heard the low voice of a man.

Before I knew it, the Black Knight was in front of me, reaching his right hand out.

It seems like he didn't notice that I was confused when he came here.

"A…Ah."

Puzzled, I grabbed his hand and stood up.

Standing up, I looked at him again.

His entire body was covered with black plate mail and I could see a red stone embedded on his helmet.

His height was also a little low for a man.

"That was a disaster."

"Eh?"

"Look, the ogre."

"A… ah"

I just now noticed what he said.

"Its best if we leave here as soon as possible, while its still bright and before the smell of blood attracts more monsters."

"You're right, it's best if we leave here quickly."

I agree with the Black Knight's warning.

He was right, staying here was dangerous

The Black Knight is too, even though he helped us, I shouldn't let my guard down.

"Ah, That's right. Excuse me, can I ask you something?"

"N?"

"Um, which way is the city?"

"Ha?"

What is this guy saying?

"Why are you asking such a thing?"

“Ah, um… well.”

It looks like he’s having a hard time answering.

He’s suspicious.

“No way, are you a spy for the demons?”

“Eh? Nope, you’re wrong.”

He clearly said no.

It doesn’t seem like he’s lying.

“Why are you so wary even though I’m just asking for directions?”

He tilted his head when he heard me.

Well, he’s certainly right.

“Sorry, we’re in the middle of an escort mission. We need to be suspicious of anyone.”

“Ah, is that so.”

The Black Knight seemed to have been convinced.

“So, why are you going to the capital?”

“I want to get a job.”

“A job.”

Of all the places, it had to be the capital?

“I’m not sure if you know this, but it’s already known by most people that the capital’s security is deteriorating.”

“Eh?”

All of us froze.

My subordinates who were healed by the Black Unicorn started gathering around His Majesty.

Good, everyone’s safe.

Then I said this to the Black Knight.

“Eh? If I’m not wrong. When we went to the Holy Country a few weeks ago the stories about the capital were a really hot topic among the people.”

By the way, the reason why I’m able to speak this brazenly in front of His Majesty is because he also knows the current situation it was in.

“…….. That’s completely different from what I heard.”

Oi, oi.

Who the heck did he ask?

“What to do….”

The Black Knight looked like he didn’t know what to do.

It looks like he really was serious, when he said that he was searching for a job.

“Now that I think about it, why did you come out of the forest? Why didn’t you go through the forest on the road?”

I told him what had been bothering me.

“Ahh~…….”

Again, he’s having a hard time answering it.

Earlier, he asked me where to go. Something’s not quite right here.

…….

No way.

“You…. were you lost just now?”

When I said so, everyone, including His Majesty, stared at the Black Knight.

“……..Yes.”

The Black Knight replied in a small voice.

I was right huh.

He, got lost…….

“Pfft.”

————Ahahahaahahahah!

When I said that, I, the royal family, my subordinates and even the servants started laughing.

“Ah….. ahahaha…”

The Black Knight hung his head and laughed shyly.

It seems like this Black Knight isn’t a bad guy after all.

“Sorry, sorry….”

“It’s fine….”

After being laughed at, hard, for being lost, I was now talking to a man who seemed to be a noble on his way to the capital.

By the way, the men and women are riding the brown horses while girls and boys were riding white horses.

The blue mantled knight from earlier was riding a brown horse right next to a man with green hair, who seemed to be in his 20s.

I decided to walk besides them instead of riding Hayate, because I looked intimidating when I did that.

Hayate seemed to want being ridden, though.

But still, what did he mean by the capital’s security getting worse?

It’s completely different from what Amaterasu-sama told me.

“I would have never thought that I’d get to see the Legendary Black Unicorn with my own eyes.”

“Yeah, I also thought that I must’ve been dreaming when he appeared in the forest.”

The men expressed their agreement to mantled-Knight-san’s words.

The people around me were staring at Hayate.

Indeed, if a real legendary creature was in front of them, why wouldn’t they want to stare at it.

“Come to think of it, I still haven’t heard your name.”

“Now that you say it, you’re right.”

“(Biku!)”

Oh no…….

What should I do? How can I hide it from them?

While I was thinking, the nobleman told me.

“I am the Empire’s Emperor, James Guratosu.”

My thinking stopped when he said that.

Just now, what did he say?

“Mu? Is something wrong, Black Knight?”

The nobleman…. no, the Emperor curiously asked me.

“Your Majesty, that was a bit sudden…..”

Mantled-Knight-san said with an amazed face.

“It’s okay, is it not? If not for Black Knight saving us, I, no we wouldn’t be walking on this road.”

There was a woman, who seemed to be in her 20s, with blonde hair that was bundled into dumplings wearing a dress with gold embroideries.

It was his wife.

She seems quite young….

“I’m sorry for being late, I am James Guratosu’s wife. Claire Guratosu is my name.”

“By the way, she’s four years older than me.”

“Eh!?”

I hope they’ll forgive me for my sudden outburst.

Wait, really!?

“It’s alright. Everyone else also thought what you’re thinking right now.”

Mantled-Knight-san placed a hand on my left shoulder.
Everyone around me nodded in unison.

It seems like everyone else also thought that it was funny.

“Thanks. Umm~”

“Conrad. Conrad Aiden.”

Is what Mantled-Knight-san…. Conrad-san said .

“My name is Chris Guratosu.”

Next was a boy with blond hair, wearing a blue uniform who was riding on a white horse.

Is he younger than me?

“I’m Elene Guratosu.”

Last was a girl who was wearing a pink dress.

She looked and felt like a tomboy.

Out of nowhere, Elene suddenly said:

“Ne! What’s your name? Where’d you come from? Why are you still wearing your helmet? How did you make the black unicorn accept you? Ne~ Tell me.”

“Umm~…”

She suddenly started asking me a lot of questions with great enthusiasm.

Everyone face’s had the same expression.

Well, its common for children to do this.

“Now, now. Elene, can’t you see that the Black Knight is troubled.”

“That’s right. You’re 13 years old now. You need to be more behaved now.”

“You’re so noisy, Niisama.”

“Now, you…”

“Now, now. Chris, Elene. The two of you need to calm down.”

…….

‘What the?’

‘The way they talk to each other is just like regular families?’

But I think this is good.

I'd want to protect a country that's run by these kinds of people.

"How should we call you?"

It was now my turn to introduce myself.

"……"

"? What's wrong?"

Everyone stared at me because I have gone silent.

I think that it's best if I tell them who I really am.

However, they are the Emperor, his soldiers and his servants….

"A… umm…"

"…… Is there a reason that you can't?"

"…. Yes."

I decided to be honest to them.

"Actually, I was told that I can't reveal my identity in light of certain circumstances."

"Told not to? By whom?"

"I… can't say. I can assure you though that we are not your enemies. As proof I will reveal my real identity to you."

"Is it okay?"

The Emperor intently listened to me.

I judged that these people are trustworthy.

I'm not trying to boast, but I'm pretty good at judging people with my eyes.

Also, having those in power as my allies has its merits.

Especially the one with the highest authority in the country.

"You deserve my trust. However, there's a possibility that we are being watched by someone."

"Watched?"

Conrad listened to what I had to say.

Well, it was just a hypothesis.

“I’m suspecting this because of the ogres. Normally, ogres prefer to be alone. However, five of them that appeared together, today.”

“No way!”

Conrad noticed something.

“No way. You’re saying that what happened today was planned by somebody?”

Everyone’s eyes widen as Conrad says this.

Maybe because everyone was so busy, nobody had time to think about it.

“Yes. It may just be a hypothesis, but I think the possibility is quite high.”

Because of what I said, the faces of the Queen, the Princess and the servants turned blue.

The men on the other hand, sharpened their eyes and increased their guard.

“But who…?”

The Emperor asked.

‘I don’t really know who it is, but I may be able to single him out.’

‘He should’ve set up a fake identity as a guard in the capital.’

“It’s probably a collaboration between the demons and those who are in power.”

“What!? A collaboration!?”

Everyone stood, surprised by my conclusion.

Apparently nobody thought that they could be ‘Collaborating’.

If you thought about it normally, it’d be impossible for a human to make a deal with the demons.

“It’s not impossible. They could’ve cooperated because their interests aligned with each other.”

Because high ranking people always want more profit.

Even if they're enemies, as long as they can get something in return, everything is fine.

"There's also another reason for these 'two'. It's because we're close to the capital.

"And that's because?"

The Crown Prince, Chris, asked a question.

"Because it's a good opportunity. It'd take a few days for you to reach this place from the Holy country. Of course it'd take the same number of days from the castle to here. So it's a good time for a raid to occur. This is the hint."

Everyone tilted their heads.

Is it that difficult?
Why is the Princess rolling her eyes?

It's cute, but that's the behavior of a man, not that of a child.

It isn't as good as Yuusuke's though.

"Then please answer my questions. Conrad-san, did you encounter any greater monsters on the way back?"

"No, we didn't even encounter any minor monsters like goblins."

Everyone nodded to Conrad's words.

"Thank you very much. At this point I understood the reason completely."

"Is that true!?"

The queen was really surprised by what I said.

"Perhaps, the person in the capital, the nobles of the Holy Kingdom and the demons are in contact in some way. Since the demons are the only ones who can manipulate monsters. Maybe the person in the capital had some information which the demons wanted and in exchange for that, he asked them to kill the royal family. And this place is the best spot for killing you. A place where trees are high enough to hide their shadows. Perfect for beings like ogres. The road is also wide enough for five of ogres to wreak havoc. The

ones that could've investigated this place are likely humans who are close to the capital. There are some people who find royalty to be a problem. They are only doing these things because of their own interests. Therefore, I can conclude: The person in the capital worked with the demons so that he can say that this was the work of the demons."

I explained my conclusion to them.

Dismay was visible on everyone's faces.

Well, after fighting those ogres earlier, once we think that it's over, more problems will probably occur.

If we don't look for the traitor now, there's a high chance that he'll do it again.

I thought of that as I watched their expressions.

There!

"Wow~ You're really awesome!"

————!?

Everyone had a look of astonishment.

Ah, I was right.

While I was calmly overlooking everyone, I noticed somebody under the branches on the left side of a big tree.

I couldn't see him very well.

"……. Who are you?"

"Hoh? You're not like the other humans… Why do you look so calm?"

Surprisingly, he asked me a question.

"In times like this, the first one to become restless, loses."

"Haha! You just said something interesting~ Black Knight-san"

While saying so, the opponent emerged from the shadows.

The one that stood there had silver hair with a wolf face. He had the body of a human with the tail of a wolf. He was a werewolf that wore long black boots

with brown pants and red scale armor.

He had twin daggers equipped on both hips.

“You’re wrong there. I want to make a deal with you.”

“Why did you say that I’m wrong?”

“You can’t make a deal?”

From the way he talks and the way he looks, I could tell that he’s quite young.

“If I wanted to make a deal, I would first find someone whose attitude is the complete opposite to yours.”

I don’t understand, is that really how I appear to others?

“Ah~… You’re right.”

“Well, it was you who provoked the ogres into attacking.”

“Bingo!”

He really has a lighthearted personality.

“I’m Gardo.”

“What!? The [Fire Fang] Gardo!?”

Conrad raised his voice in surprise.

Before I knew it, everyone was already holding a weapon.

It seemed like that werewolf was famous.

“Otto, I’m only gonna retreat this time.”

“Why?”

“The small fries aside, you seem quite dangerous. I need to make plans against you. See ya”

The werewolf who named himself as Gardo disappeared.

Well then, it seems like he fixed his eyes on me.

What should I do now….

I pondered for a while as I stared at the branch where Gardo had been.

(T/L: Yep, I'm the same KK_Akatsuki that writes Eulalia. I'm not stopping it by the way, my life was just very busy.)

Chapter 5

The Black Knight by Akatsuki Momoka

http://ncode.syosetu.com/n2388bg/

Translated by imperfectluck

Chapter 5 – Explanations and invitations

After that strange werewolf Gardo left.

A bit off the highway, in an opening in the forest.

“Normal shield!!!”

The three mages chanted the spell, and a dome-shaped shield expanded from the ground.

“Lighting!”

The female mage summoned a ball of light, to illuminate the area.

“Thank you very much.”

I thanked the three of them.

The people gathered here are, the royal family, five maids, two knights, two swordsmen, three archers, three mages, six horses, Hayate, and finally me.

“No, since you saved us all, thank you very much.”

With red hair and brown eyes, it was the cute female mage that spoke up.

Her height reaches to about my neck, she’s wearing a pale pink robe, and she’s holding a long staff with a red magic stone embedded in it.

I think she’s probably about the same age as me.

“It’s all good.”

When I said so, she lowered her head.

Oh my~.

It seems that her face has become red.

“Hohoho, it’s good to be young. Well then, black knight, how about we have a chat now?”

While laughing with a happy face, the emperor spoke up.

If you misunderstand things like this, I’ll be troubled.

After all, I’m a woman.

—-Clink

I took off my helmet.

“A girl!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!”

Everyone was shocked to see my face, and shouted in unison.

Predictably, due to my voice, everyone thought I was a “man.”

It seems that all the women other than the empress and the princess are rather disappointed.

The female mage looked as if she had lost her soul or something.

“I’m sorry for surprising everyone like that. My name is Chie Saitou. I’m 17.”

As I said so, I placed my helmet on Hayate who was next to me.

It’s tiresome to keep holding it all the time.

“Chie Saitou? Not only is your appearance one I’ve never seen, I’ve never heard of such a name either.”

“Your skin color, hair color, and even the shape of your face, I’ve never seen anything like it.”

It seems that everyone was in agreement with the emperor and the prince’s words.

Well, it was just like Amaterasu-sama said, in this world there's no black hair, black eyes, or oriental people at all.

That also means my yellow skin color isn't here either.

Anyone would be surprised to see such a person here.

"It's understandable that everyone would be so surprised. There's no other humans like me here in Eldoa."

"Well then, from where might you have come from?"

Conrad-san asked the obvious question.

Eh, huh?

"……Conrad-san, was it? What happened to your casual speech up until now?"

You don't have to be so formal with a little girl like me.

Heck, I was lost until just a little while ago.

However –

"No, to be rude by using casual speech to such a strong knight as yourself would be most embarrassing. I realized it when you appeared riding the legendary black unicorn……"

He said so with such a serious face.

This is no good…

Although he can't be compared to Yuusuke, for a handsome guy to make such a face, my heart did skip a beat.

I'm still a woman, after all!

"H, hai."

"There is no need to use formal speech with me either. Also, I do not mind if you call me Conrad."

On top of forbidding me to use formal speech with him, I was told to call his name directly without honorifics.

"Ok… Oi Hayate, what's with this face of yours that's saying to praise you more?"

When I looked at Hayate next to me who looked as happy as if it was about himself, he had such a triumphant expression.

I'm pretty amazed.

Is this guy really the legendary unicorn?

"Ahem. As for the question about where I'm from, it's a secret because it's a complicated matter."

"I see… Then, how about your sword? I've never seen its kind."

It's good that the emperor is so understanding.

The emperor requested an explanation about Sakuya.

"This is called a katana, it's a weapon from my country. My katana's name is Sakuya."

"Sakuya? What's that?"

The princess tilted her head in puzzlement.

"Sakuya means a night with no moon. It's talking about a new moon. This pure black katana Sakuya is supposed to represent the new moon."

"Would it be alright if I held the sword to take a closer look at it?"

"Sure, I don't mind."

I removed Sakuya from my left hip, and passed it while still in its sheath to the prince.

"Eh? Huh?"

"Chris, what's the matter?"

The emperor asked the prince.

"Father, I can't pull the sword out of its sheath."

"What? Let me see it…… Oh, indeed. Chie, what exactly is this?"

The emperor asked me a question.

Everyone around seemed to be curious as well.

"Well, actually Sakuya is a custom-made katana for me only."

“For you only?”

“Nobody else can pull it out.”

I told them so, but there was a follow-up question.

“However, if nobody else can pull it out, wouldn’t it be meaningless if it was always kept out of its sheath?”

After saying so, he tilted his head.

I asked the emperor to return Sakuya to me, pulled it out of its sheath, placed the sheath on my left hip and went over to Conrad.

“Conrad, try holding this.”

“…? Yes……?”

—-Clang!!

Although it didn’t penetrate into the ground, there was the sound of something heavy falling onto the ground.

“What! What’s with this weight!?”

As soon as I passed Sakuya to him, Conrad crouched down from trying to hold on to something so heavy.

“Does everyone understand now? After Sakuya leaves its sheath, other than me -”

“I want to try holding it!!!!”

“That won’t be possible!!!!”

Everyone panicked at the unbelievable statement, and I grabbed Sakuya away from the princess that tried to hold it.

Everyone around seemed to be rather flustered as well.

“Eh~”

“No, now’s not the time for ‘eh~!’”

You’re just a 13 year old kid, I won’t let you touch something so dangerous!

The princess looked like she felt wronged and puffed her cheeks.

“Chie-sama, I’m so sorry!”

The maid with brown hair passed the princess to another maid that had thinning white hair bunched up in a ball on her head, with a wrinkly face, and she was wearing a black dress with long sleeves and a long skirt, with a frilly white apron, she looked like a kindly old lady as she received the princess.

“This is no joke…”

“As always…”

The elderly maid was fed up with the princess’s antics.

It wasn’t just her, the other maids, the soldiers, and even the prince seemed to be fed up as well.

“Hahaha, Elene’s quite the tomboy.”

“Oi you, it’s not a laughing matter!”

The emperor’s words were a little out of line, he interjected as if he was being a comic.

Is it entirely natural?

Well, even more than that, before long it makes you wonder if this princess will make it an be alright.

As I was thinking so, I sheathed Sakuya.

“Alright, let’s return to the topic at hand. Although I was interrupted in the middle, once Sakuya has been pulled from its sheath, it cannot be used except by me.”

—-I see.

Everyone muttered in convincement.

“That’s everything about the katana. Are there more questions?”

“Uhh, what about the matter of your voice being different earlier?”

“Ahh, as for that…”

The elderly maid that took the princess earlier asked the question this time, so I took my helmet from Hayate's back, and began my explanation.

"The magic stone embedded in the helmet near the eyes, can change my voice. After all, it's important to hide my gender, if I don't completely hide all information about myself, I don't know when I might get ambushed by the enemy."

"You're careful to that extent, eh."

Conrad's eyes had a look of respect to them.

Hnn~……

Even though I'm the younger one, he's using formal speech with me, it feels strange to be respected like this.

"Oh yes! How'd you get to know the black unicorn?"

The elderly maid asked another question of me.

This person, it seems like this is what she wanted to hear the most.

The others all seem the same way.

"Well, even if you ask… When I was taking a relaxing stroll by the lake, Hayate appeared in front of me, and I didn't really do anything in particular."

Incidentally, the fact that I met him literally just a moment ago, I'll keep that a secret.

"……Nothing in particular?"

"Hai."

"Truly?"

"Hai."

I've lost track of how many times today that the princess's questions have caused everyone other than the princess herself to be taken aback with dumbfounded expressions.

It can't be helped.

After all, someone so outside the norm like me, appeared alongside the

legendary black unicorn.

However –

“Eh~ How boring~!”

—- *Everyone falls over*

At the princess’s words, everyone just about tripped and fell.

“Oi you~…… Don’t you understand what an important time this is!?”

The prince got mad and started shouting at the princess.

Perhaps her antics trouble him more than anyone else here?

“I mean, come on~”

It seems that this princess is searching for excitement.

I’m guessing that, she wants to be acknowledged by a unicorn like Hayate, and expects to be able to go on a grand adventure.

However, I myself have only come to this world for only a few hours so far.

I’ll be troubled if you expect a grand adventure.

While thinking along those lines, I enjoyed watching the prince and princess fight.

“Truly, I don’t know what to do about her……”

The emperor was shaking his head.

This person is also struggling as well, eh.

Maybe in the royal family, the men are all the straight ones to the women being the funny ones in the comedy duos?

“You’re such a baka! In the first place, do you know how low the chance is to see a unicorn?”

“Eh?”

Ah, this child definitely doesn’t study.

Since you're a country's princess, isn't it bad if you don't study?

"You really don't know anything, do you?"

Prince, aren't you tired from being so angry?

"Uhh, could you guys stop for now?"

I'll listen to it later.

"It's all good. Chris is just working off his stress right now."

"Instead of working it off, I think it's increasing."

His dialogue just now seems to naturally be like a comic's.

This prince is going to develop high blood pressure one day.

While I was thinking that, everyone was also thinking similar things, and watched to see how the course of events would unfold.

"There's only been one person in 500 years! Frankly speaking, while you're living, to meet and be acknowledged by a unicorn as a worthy knight, the possibility of that happening is close to zero!"

Aww~, even though I thought the prince was pretty cool up until now, the image has been completely shattered.

Well, nobody's perfect.

"That's already amazing by itself, but this is the legendary black unicorn that acknowledged her! The black unicorn that nobody has ever seen before!"

"……"

The prince's momentum pressured the princess as she fell silent.

An analogy would be, it's as if a small animal froze up in front of a predator.

Although she's a bit pitiful, it's what she gets.

"After explaining things to this extent, do you see how amazing of a knight Chie-dono is!? She's the strongest knight in all of Eldoa!!"

Prince, I'm really sorry, I'm not that amazing.

"Even so you, you're being quite rude to her. Anyways, you're always, always-"

It seems that the prince has accumulated quite a lot of complaints against the princess, and the topic has gone off on a tangent.

I think I should stop them soon.

“Hai, that’s enough. Your Highness, the princess looks like she is regretting her words.”

“……Hai.”

“……”

Phew~, I’ve settled the situation somehow.

I can understand the princess’s feelings well, because I’ve been scolded by my brother before saying “don’t just stay shut in your room, get out some!”

I bent over and looked the depressed princess in the eye.

The princess’s height, reaches up to about my chest when I’m in my armored form and is probably about 155 centimeters tall.

“Princess, please don’t be so down. His Highness only yelled at you because he’s really worried about you.”

I laughed and grinned while saying so to the princess.

“…But onii-sama is always angry at everything I do…”

“Such as?”

I asked the depressed princess.

She seems to be quite down.

If she had dog ears and a tail, they would surely be hanging down.

“When I take too long to choose my clothes, when I thought I’d try to cook, when I sneaked into the armory, when I sneaked out of the castle-”

“……Wait, hold on just a minute here!!!!!!!!!!!”

Conrad and the military personnel, the maids, and I, had our thoughts in perfect synchronization.

No, really, wait a minute.

The first two are fine.

But the last two are surely bad!

“……Please, princess, don’t do anything dangerous.”

The elderly maid spoke up.

Everyone, including me, nodded.

It’s really dangerous, princess.

“But like, I’m so bored~”

The princess puffed out her cheeks again.

When a beauty is doing it, it’s really cute.

Wait, that shouldn’t be right.

“Princess, an armory is a place for the storage of deadly weapons.”

“I know that already!”

When I said so, the princess got angry.

Well, at least she knows that much already.

“After all, it’s dangerous to handle or touch things I don’t know, of course I know that already!”

“That’s…”

After hearing that, the princess fell silent.

Really, what an idiotic princess.

Even though the soldiers and maids of the castle are working so hard for the royal family’s safety.

……

Huh?

This time, something caught my attention.

Maybe, this princess…

“Uh, princess, would this happen to be your first time out of the castle?”

“Yep, you got it.”

The prince answered my question for me.

“Could it be that, you also don’t go to school?”

“Yes. It’s not the case for me, but Elene doesn’t know anything about the world, and she won’t even know what to do after leaving the castle. Also, the city is dangerous right now.”

“……So what you’re saying is that, Your Highness attends school, correct?”

Everyone nodded.

As if they were saying of course.

At seeing so, I thought while pulling on my face.

It’s like this after all!

No doubt, that’s why she’s always seeking something exciting!

I stood up with my back to the princess.

“……Um, I think this may be rude but I’ll say it anyways. Are you all bakas!!!!!!?”

By reflex, I yelled.

However, no regrets!

When I looked around, everyone seemed to be taken aback.

At this time, the elderly maid replied to me first.

“Hey! What is this, calling us bakas!? No matter how important you are, we won’t overlook such verbal abuse!”

The elderly maid was shouting at me angrily.

Also, everyone seemed to be waiting for my response, and other than the princess, they were all glaring at me.

Everyone seems to have the same opinion.

And so, I spoke up to them.

“Yep, you’re all bakas. Like this, it’s natural that the princess will try dangerous

things! She's even quite pitiful!"

"Pitiful?"

Hearing this, the maid tilted her head.

Oh, geeeez!

What's this! I thought they were such a good family just a little while ago, turns out they're useless!

Another family's matters, I didn't want to involve myself in them, but I can't take it anymore!

"Ok, listen up. A normal girl that's the princess's age, should be going to school, studying, and playing with friends! While living with everyone like that, she'll naturally learn the ways of the world, and the children around her will stimulate her own abilities and cause them to bloom!"

"Abilities?"

This time the emperor was speaking.

"That's right! For example, with people around you you can grow up to be a proper person, you can become a person who can analyze the situation at hand well, everyone has some sort of ability of their own, school's perfect for improving those kinds of things! As evidence, isn't His Highness himself a good example!?"

"M, me?"

The prince was flabbergasted.

"Yep. What did Your Highness learn in school?"

"Eh? Things like the history of Eldoa, magic, and swordsmanship."

"Then, do you have a rival that you don't want to lose at those things to?"

"I do!"

The prince immediately answered.

"I have an important job to do as the next emperor! For that reason, losing to that guy alone is……!"

It seems that he’s got quite the rivalry going on with someone.

“I don’t know who you’re talking about when you say that guy, but… Just like in the case of Your Highness, school is a good place to develop rivalries. And precisely because of such a rival, Your Highness is able to firmly understand your role, as well as have clear goals.”

Everyone seemed to be taken aback.

They seem to have finally realized it.

“And yet, the princess isn’t allowed outside of the castle because it’s dangerous, that’s the worst thing you can do when raising a child. Does the castle have that many people besides you all? Nobody ever thought about such a thing?”

I said so as I was amazed.

Everyone had expressions as if they were being punished.

“On top of that, even though her own brother is allowed to go outside to do whatever he wants, she can’t do anything she wants, has anyone ever really considered the princess’s feelings?”

I looked at the emperor and empress as I said so.

“Your Majesties, I know that you must be terribly busy personages but, it couldn’t be that you’re leaving your own children to be raised by the maids?”

(Mouths opening)

The royal couple grimaced.

Looks like I guessed right on target.

“If you do such a thing, the children might even get the mistaken impression that they’re not loved by the parents, no?”

“Eh? They love me?”

—I’m in shock!

Everyone, including me, was shocked at the princess's unexpected words.

This is bad, it seems that this princess has already considered things up to this point.

I looked the princess in the eyes.

"They do, princess, Their Majesties are very worried about you. But, their daughter's behavior is also a problem for them. Do you understand?"

"…Yeah."

"Well then, please be more aware of your own position from now on, and be more careful for your own sake around dangerous things."

"I got it."

Yep, it's good that she can be so easily taught.

"As for Your Majesties, please properly spend even a little time with your family."

They seemed to be properly paying attention to me.

"And as for Your Highness, please listen properly to the princess's complaints. Since you're her older brother, you should at least be on her side."

"…Hai."

Ok good, the prince should be good like this as well.

"Then, everyone please take the princess's feelings into more consideration."

"We're sorry!!!!!!"

The soldiers and maids apologized together in unison.

Well, that should be enough lecturing now.

……

Somehow, I just realized that sweat was running down my back unpleasantly.

I, just instinctively said something so self-important to the royal family!

Ahh~, I'm such a baka!!

I withdraw my previous statement about having no regrets!

“Chie.”

While I was busy regretting everything in my mind, the emperor spoke up.

This is bad, I might have made the emperor angry……

He walked towards me, and stopped right next to me.

“Please, become a knight of my empire!”

“……Eh?”

The emperor’s words were so unexpected, that a weird voice escaped me.

Huh?

What’s this?

“This is the first time I’ve met a knight such as you! No, I’ve never even met such a person like you!”

“Eh? No, I think that people like me should be just about everywhere?”

Even more so, since I’m just a commoner.

Well, he seems to be able to analyze situations faster than most, even I’ve realized this.

“No, there’s never been anyone that’s dared to point out my bad points like you have. However, you did that to me. It’s not just me, nobody’s ever pointed fingers at anyone here before. If someone likes you joins us, our empire might undergo a great change!”

“I also implore you to join us!”

Conrad also came running up to me, saying so.

“I want to follow you! Although it’s quite embarrassing, I was called the strongest in the empire. However, I’ve realized clearly in the ogre raid earlier that I’m still quite unskilled. And so, I’ve thought so ever since meeting and speaking with you! You’re the one that’s truly worthy of being called the strongest!”

Conrad said so with strong conviction behind his words.

Oh no, I have no interested in being the “strongest,” I’m quite embarrassed.

“I’m especially impressed with your reasoning just now. With so little

information, you were able to reason so much. By all means, I would like to request you join our military!”

“Please!!!!!!”

After Conrad finished speaking, all of his subordinates also bowed at me and asked me to join.

Indeed, if I entered the military instead of a guild, there should be many benefits to that as well.

I’ll be able to see what this country is like, and if I’m successful and get promoted I’ll even have subordinates.

More than anything, if I get far in my career, I’ll be able to acquire social status.

In any world, after all, there are those in power.

Of course, there will be bad people among them.

I might not be able to do anything to those guys if I’m in a guild, but it’s a different story if I’m in the military.

More than that, in order to live in this world, of course I would want a place where I belong.

I also have my promise with Amaterasu-sama, so I only had one answer.

“I understand.”

And like this I’ll join the military, and incidentally be able to improve the public order of this empire!

“From now on, I’ll be in your care.”

“Ohh! You don’t have to be so formal, Chie!”

The emperor was happily shaking my right hand with both his hands as he said so.

And so, I decided to join the Imperial Army.

Alright! I’ll work hard from now on in order to get promoted!

Huh?

Come to think of it, Conrad said he wanted to follow me from now on.

What’s Conrad’s position?

Chapter 6

Chapter 6 – The capital and the investiture ceremony

The empire – in front of the castle, evening.

After the explanations ended, it took us an hour to travel here to the castle.

“This is the capital, eh.”

I muttered to myself as I gazed upon the tall castle ramparts.

The walls are made of stone, with no end in sight for either direction, and my neck hurts from trying to stretch it to see just how tall the walls are.

On top of that, it seems that the walls have been reinforced by magic, so even if advanced monsters attack, I highly doubt they could penetrate the walls.

Well, if it’s superior monsters or dragons, they could probably break them in an instant.

I was there right now in front of the only entrance to the castle walls, together with the emperor’s group, while wearing my helmet.

At the sight of us, two gatekeepers that seemed to be adventurers or people from a guild, were staring at us with their mouths wide agape.

To be more specific, they were staring at me as I was pulling on Hayate’s reins.

Well, it’s to be expected that they would react this way.

“Hohoho. You’re the center of attention, Chie.”

I heard laughing from behind me.

Oops, I almost forgot.

“I’m sorry, but could you conceal my name if at possible?”

I asked so in a low, manly voice.

“Ahh, is that so. Then, what should we call you?”

I tilted my head in puzzlement for a bit while thinking.

“I don’t mind if you just call me the black knight. Since everyone that sees my armor and katana are calling me so anyways.”

When I came to this world, for sure, Amaterasu-sama had said so as well.

Anyways, I think I like the name as well.

Rather than a hero and his comrades out of a story, I get to feel like an entirely different type of presence.

I don’t want to be in a party together with that baka Yuusuke……

“I got it. Then, the black knight it shall be. If it’s possible, could you ride Hayate into the city? It would be good if we could show everyone the way the strongest knight looks as he’s riding the legendary black unicorn.”

“Sure.”

I agreed to the emperor, and got on Hayate.

Even though I didn’t really want to stand out, and said this to Conrad just earlier.

“You’re not just the strongest in the empire, you’re the strongest in all of Eldoa! That’s why, please enter the capital while riding on the unicorn!”

But, Conrad said that with some amazing vigor.

It seems that he also thinks that it would be good if I rode Hayate.

The meaning might be different from what Conrad is thinking, for me to be riding Hayate alongside the emperor’s party in such a grand fashion, and having the people see me.

There’s two reasons for this.

One is to not only show the residents of the capital, but also to show off to the traveling adventurers and merchants from other countries.

Adventurers and merchants often gather here at the capital.

Right now, they were gathered around us as well.

Letting them see me, that is, a knight riding the legendary black unicorn

alongside the imperial family, is order to have them spread the word to other countries.

Doing this ensures that other countries won't move against us so easily.

As for why all of this is necessary, it's because our enemies aren't just limited to monsters and demons, humans are included as well.

The continent of Eldoa is shaped like a rhombus, and there's several islands surrounding Eldoa as well.

Including the islands, on this continent there are three countries, an empire, a theocracy, and a kingdom, as well as an elven sanctuary in the forest.

Among them, the empire's territory is quite vast, and other countries have tried to steal land by force many times in the past.

I learned that in the knowledge of history that I was given.

The other reason is to show the ringleader causing trouble in this country, the person behind the previous incident.

It's similar to showing me off to the adventurers and merchants from other countries, but the overall goal is to prevent bad things from happening to this country.

Basically, the goal is to intimidate others in order to prevent incidents.

Although the effect might be small today just from me going through the capital, but with time, word of my presence should spread throughout the continent quickly.

Based on the above, I rode Hayate, the royal family rode in a horse-drawn carriage that was prepared for them at the castle gate, while Conrad and another green-haired knight were riding on horses as well.

And so, the castle gate opened.

—-Creak—-

—-Bang!!!!

Cheers resounded when the castle gate opened.

It seems that a parade had been prepared to celebrate the return of the royal

family.

“Amazing…”

At everyone’s incredible enthusiasm, I muttered so by reflex.

We entered and proceeded on the road towards the castle.

Even though I could see it from outside as well, it’s really such a big castle.

Around us were buildings that looked like they came straight out of a game.

Looking at them, I thought about it once again.

Science isn’t very developed here, it’s a world of swords and magic.

I have to move amongst such a crowd, all the while –

“Oi oi!”

“Could that be the legendary black unicorn?”

“Is that real?”

“What’s that black knight?”

I heard various voices such as these.

“Hohohoho! As expected, everyone’s surprised.”

The emperor in his horse-drawn carriage laughed as he said so.

“Black knight, I know it’s sudden, but, I’d like to get your investiture ceremony done immediately tonight. We’ll also have a mantle made immediately for you.”

“Mantle?”

I repeated the emperor’s words back to them, but the royal couple just kept smiling and didn’t say anything more on the matter.

But, something like a formal ceremony, is that really necessary for a regular soldier?

At least, that’s what I think.

Tonight, even.

– Before the castle door

Before long, we arrived at the castle door.

Before the castle door, there was a full force of servants, soldiers, and nobles waiting for us.

Oi oi.

It’s no good if the soldiers aren’t patrolling the capital…

While I was thinking so in amazement, a noble came up to the imperial procession and kneeled.

“Your Majesty! It’s good that you’ve returned safely!”

This noble was wearing dark green aristocratic clothing, had green hair and blue eyes, was approximately 174-175 centimeters tall, and he was a middle-aged man around 50 years of age.

Huh?

This person, seems similar to the knight-san with green hair…

“Reiz, I have returned.”

The emperor answered the man by addressing him with his name.

“While I was away visiting the theocracy, has anything happened here?”

“No, nothing at all. By the way, Your Majesty, who exactly is that knight there?”

The man seemed to mind my presence very much, and asked the emperor.

It was something the other nobles, soldiers, and regular people were probably thinking of as well.

“I’ve been late introducing him, black knight, come here.”

“Yes!”

I tried to reply in a knightly manner, and had Hayate move close to the emperor’s carriage.

“This person happens to be the black knight. Although I can’t share his name with everyone, he’s someone that’s become a knight of my empire now.”

—(A commotion)

Everyone became quite unsettled when the emperor said so.

“Uh, Your Majesty! What could you be saying! Someone like this with such an unknown nature!”

The man raised his voice in objection at the emperor’s words.

Well, it’s to be expected.

However, at hearing those words, the emperor said –

“Reiz! Watch your words! This person is our savior that rescued all of our lives!”

“!? ……Lives?”

Eh?

What’s with that reaction?

I wondered quite a bit about the man’s reaction.

But, even though something caught my attention, nothing really happened, so I decided to keep listening to what the emperor was saying.

“That’s right. When we were on our way to the capital, we got ambushed by five ogres.”

When everyone heard that, there was quite a commotion again.

“Three of them were somehow defeated by Conrad and the others but, ogres are originally enemies that require 20 people to defeat. On top of that, it was a battle where we were being defended as well. Of course, there’s limits to people’s strength. When we were in a pinch, the black knight came to our rescue at a critical moment while riding the black unicorn. What are you saying to that person!”

The emperor got angry, and was glaring at the man.

It’s indeed something an emperor would say.

He’s got the style down pat.

“B, but, if you don’t even know who he is and where he’s from…”

“Even though you’re the prime minister, don’t you understand yet!? There’s nothing more that can prove how amazing this knight is than the fact that he’s the one chosen by the black unicorn! He’s the strongest knight in all of Eldoa!”

This person seems to be the prime minister.

Indeed, it’s just as the emperor says.

That is to say, being selected by a unicorn, should already prove what kind of person this person is.

It’s even more so if it’s the legendary black unicorn.

“Ergh……”

The prime minister fell silent.

“Tonight will be this person’s investiture ceremony! Prepare everything that’s necessary right away!”

The emperor gave an order to the servants, and they immediately went off to fulfill it.

While the servants were surprised for a moment, they somehow seemed to understand after seeing me and hurried off to prepare.

I wonder why they were so surprised?

“Oh black knight, I apologize for the rudeness just now. We’ll immediately have a room for you prepared. We’ll also have to make some preparations, so it would be good to get some rest first.”

Unlike earlier, the emperor was now smiling a gentle smile.

After that, he gave some orders to one of the maids that was accompanying him, and she became my personal maid.

“Black knight-sama, by Empress Claire’s orders, I will be taking care of milady from now on, and my name is Alice Aiden.”

This maid had long tawny hair hanging down, reddish brown eyes, a nice face and a calm atmosphere about her, and she was wearing the same maid clothing as the other maids, a black one-piece dress with a long skirt, with a frilly white apron and black shoes.

She was about 160 centimeters tall, and probably around 14 years old.

There's no mistake that she's younger than I am.

Huh?

Just now, this girl said "Aiden……"

"Alice, I'll leave her to you."

"Yes, brother."

Conrad just said that, and Alice answered him.

Ahh!

Indeed, these two people, shared the same hair and eye color!

I see, so they were siblings.

"Before anything else, black knight-sama. Guide him to the stables first. While the regular stables may not befit a unicorn, but there's nowhere else for a unicorn to rest."

Conrad said so apologetically to me.

"Nah, you don't have to worry about such a thing. Right, Hayate?"

"Neigh!"

Hayate nodded.

We obtained Hayate's approval, and headed for the stables.

A bit later, in a room of the castle –

We put Hayate in the stables, and Alice guided me to a room in the castle.

By the way, Hayate's harness was left like that on him.

"This is the place."

"……Uh, is it really okay to use this place?"

The room that I had been guided to, would put the luxury hotels that I've seen on TV to shame.

There was a double bed placed against the wall, all the furniture had an antique design, and there was a large desk presumably for working on as well as

a comfortable-looking chair.

The window was large, and there were two chairs and an iron table out on the veranda as well.

There's also a bath and a toilet.

There's no mistake, this is a room for VIPs.

"By order of Their Majesties, black knight-sama, please use this room from today onwards."

Alice was smiling as she said so.

Emperor, you're giving a regular soldier like me such a room?

"This room also comes with magic to completely make it soundproof. Here is the key to this room."

As she said so, Alice handed me some type of blue stone.

It's a different color from the one embedded in my helmet, but it's a magic stone.

As a simple explanation, blue magic stones have average magic power within them, and red magic stones have really strong magic power inside, but are much fewer in number.

"May I pluck one strand of your hair?"

I looked around and confirmed that nobody was around, before removing my helmet.

And so, I pulled a hair out from my bangs and handed it to her, and immediately put my helmet on again.

Even though there's no one around, I can't be too careful.

I'll put up a barrier as well later.

As I was thinking this, I watched Alice's movements.

Alice placed my hair on top of the stone, and the stone absorbed it.

"Now, this magic stone can only be used by milady. The magic is activated by holding it up to the magic stone in the door, and it acts as a key."

Ohh, how convenient!

Meaning, the magic stone was confirming me as the master just now.

If it's like this, my privacy will probably be fine.

But anyways, I don't know if I've been lucky or not today.

I was killed by Yuusuke.

I was revived by Amaterasu-sama.

I was liked by the emperor, and managed to get a place to live.

Well, even though I didn't have to use money for it.

"Well then, black knight-sama, when the investiture ceremony is ready, I will come to pick you up."

"Ahh, thanks, Alice-san."

"You can just call me Alice. I'm 14, and younger than black knight-sama."

Just like I thought, she's 14.

Even though she's only one year older than the princess, she's so dependable.

"Okay, Alice."

I said so, and Alice exited the room while grinning.

Alright then, I'm going to have to place a barrier around this room immediately.

While I was being guided to the room, I thought up my own type of magic barrier.

"Shadow Shield!"

I made up a name for my own magic and chanted a spell.

Then, I covered the walls, floor, and ceiling of this room in a black fog.

However, it disappeared in an instant.

Everything will seem normal inside the barrier, but it will be pitch-black to anyone outside.

It should be easy to understand if you think about how sunglasses work.

After doing this, nothing inside will be visible anymore.

Especially to magician's familiars.

After all, it seems that magicians often use familiars to spy on situations.

And so, this barrier won't allow anything in other than the humans that I've allowed to.

For now, it's just Alice and the imperial family.

Other than them, even if the door is open, the black fog will prevent people from entering.

After doing things to this extent, it should be alright to take off my armor now.

I returned Sakuya and my armor to a bracelet state.

Alright! I can finally take the bath that I've been wanting!

By the way, the method to create a really hot bath is to use magic to warm it up in an instant.

I can even adjust the temperature!

Since I'm a bath lover, my happiness has reached its limit!

"…Kn……sa…"

Hmm?

Is someone calling me?

"Black knight-sama."

"!?"

When I opened my eyes, Alice was there.

"Did you sleep well?"

"Mmm. Good morning, Alice."

If I recall correctly, after my bath, I laid down on my bed and went to sleep.

By the way, underwear was already provided for me in the closet.

For some reason, the size was perfect.

Probably, before coming here, one of the maids that was accompanying the imperial family had it prepared.

The maids are so scary!

Well, before I came here I did say that I dropped my luggage somewhere, I wonder if someone prepared it for me because of that.

At that time, people were laughing heartily as well.

I'm still wearing the black clothes that I've been wearing up to now.

I guess I should go clothes shopping tomorrow?

"Black knight-sama, the preparations for the investiture ceremony have been completed."

"Alice, what time is it now?"

"It's seven."

If I recall correctly, we arrived here around five, so everything was prepared in about two hours?

What on earth are these servants of the empire?

"That's really fast…"

"Because we are here to serve."

Alice grinned as she said so.

Ahh, she didn't explain or anything at all.

"The investiture ceremony will be performed in the throne room."

How classic.

"So, the armor… Where's the armor?"

"Ahh, let me equip it now."

As I said so, I imagined myself wearing the armor.

And so, a black haze covered my body and equipped me with the armor.

"What!?"

Alice looked at me in shock.

Indeed, there seems to be nothing like this in Eldoa that can equip armor so instantaneously.

“It’s such an amazing magic item! Where did you get your hands on it?”

“Together with the katana. They’re both customized for me only.”

While Alice was busy admiring the armor, my voice came out in a low man’s voice again.

Hmm, while I’m wearing the armor, it’s probably better if I try to pay more attention to talking like a man, isn’t it?

Originally, I always talked informally anyways.

“Ehh~~, so there’s also those who can make such great things.”

They were made by a god.

“Well then, could you lead the way?”

“Ah, hai! This way.”

I had Alice lead the way to the throne room.

In front of the door to the throne room –

“Black knight-sama, when you go in front of His Majesty, please kneel, and repeat after what His Majesty says.”

“Got it.”

I received an explanation from Alice in front of the door to the throne room.

“After that, I’ll formally dress you in the mantle. Please stand once it’s finished, and look behind you.”

As I was listening to the expectation, I kept thinking.

What’s this about a mantle?

From what I remembered, only Conrad was wearing one.

Nobody else had one on.

“Then, I’ll open the door.”

Despite the fact that I was still thinking about things, Alice opened the door to the throne room.

When the door opened, I immediately heard instruments playing fanfare.

A bright red carpet continued all the way to the throne in the middle, where the emperor, empress, prince, and princess were all sitting.

There were a few people including Conrad nearby, that were wearing mantles of various different colors.

To the left and right of the long carpet, there were many nobles and soldiers standing there.

Somehow, I felt some unpleasant gazes on me……

It's mostly jealousy, I think?

That's the way those gazes felt.

When I got halfway across the carpet, the emperor stood up, and started walking down the steps with a staff in his right hand.

I kneeled in front of the emperor.

The emperor touched my left shoulder with the staff's decoration.

"Black knight. Do you swear to become a sword of the empire and protect this country?"

"I solemnly swear."

"I now recognize you as a knight of the empire, and appoint you as the knight captain and also an imperial family knight directly serving the imperial family!"

……

Huh!?

"Your Majesty!? What are you saying!?"

The prime minister spoke up before I could.

Noo, but I don't know anything either!?

Around me, there was unrest stirring again.

Except for a few people, those that knew my identity.

“Just as I said. I shall bequeath this person the title of duke, and appoint him a sword of the empire.”

“Why is it that you would give such a title to this person!? And, the knight captain is currently Conrad! And yet -”

“Your Majesty, with all due respect, if I may speak.”

To the protesting prime minister, Conrad spoke out first.

By reflex, I turned my face towards Conrad.

I thought he was someone quite amazing, but to think he was the knight captain!

“About this matter, it’s something I brought up with His Majesty myself. It’s the result of me requesting His Majesty to allow me to serve under the black knight-sama. The former vice knight captain, Kyle Strauss, has agreed to this as well.”

“!?”

Upon hearing Conrad’s words, the prime minister turned to look at the green-haired knight.

That person’s probably Kyle.

That means, Conrad and Kyle are going to get demoted!?

“Your Majesty!?”

I raised my voice in protest to the emperor.

No matter what, this can’t be good!

It’s good if I get ahead by hard work, but to suddenly appear and have a newcomer take such a title, it’s unfair to other people.

However –

“Black knight, this is something that’s already been decided. No matter what anyone says, I won’t change my mind.”

My protest has been denied.

“Now then, the mantle for the black knight-sama.”

“Yes.”

In response to Conrad’s words, Alice began putting a mantle on me.

It’s a crimson red mantle.

Looking at the color, I was surprised again.

Crimson red mantles, are supposed to only be worn by the imperial family and those close to them.

Meaning that formally dressing me in such a mantle, is evidence that nobody other than royalty is able to go against me.

“Well then, black knight-sama. Please rise, and look back.”

I stood up and looked back as Alice told me to.

Whoa~……

I’m being glared at amazingly hard.

“That is all, and now the investiture ceremony for the black knight becoming the knight captain and the imperial family knight shall now conclude! The black knight shall now return to his room to have a meal. You should rest well for today and tomorrow.”

And so, the unreasonable investiture ceremony concluded.

My bedroom –

“Sigh~…”

I sighed while I was eating a meal that was prepared by Alice.

After the investiture ceremony, Alice took me back to my room, I changed my armor into a bracelet again, perched myself on the table and chairs there, and soon after some food for me arrived.

I tried to do something as well, but I was stopped by Alice as it seems everything has been prepared for me already.

What is this, and I was only a normal high school girl up until just a few hours

ago.

After coming to this world, I've already obtained such a ridiculous title.

Just a little while ago, I was being all enthusiastic about working hard to get ahead, but now I'm in a position where I don't have to get promoted any further.

On top of that, it's the position of a duke……

In this country, the order of nobility goes like this: archduke, duke, earl, viscount, baron, then the junior nobility.

There's no marquis.

As for the lower-ranked nobility with no titles, on earth they would be referred to as knights, but here they're called the junior nobility.

That means that my current position, is right below that of the imperial family's.

My job title's already hard enough on me alone, I also have such a high noble status as well, it's obvious that everyone around me would look at me in jealousy.

Until I returned here, I was pierced so much by everyone's gazes……

"Sighhhh……."

My second sigh was deeper than the first one.

"Black knight-sama, if you sigh too much, happiness will escape from you, you know?"

No, I'm sighing because of you guys.

While having these bitter feelings inside me, I had some beef stew and salad, as well as some soft bread.

It was really delicious.

A few minutes later, I asked Alice to clean up the utensils when I finished eating.

"……Alice, could it be that, other than me, everyone else knew about the job title and noble position I was going to get?"

By everyone else, I meant the people that knew my identity.

“Yes. I heard from my brother as we were preparing.”

Alice finished collecting all the utensils onto a tray, and came up towards me.

“Please don’t mind the issue about becoming the knight captain. In the first place, it’s because my brother and Kyle-sama recommended you.”

“Come to think of it, Conrad did say something like that. But, the reaction around us……”

I feel like my problems have only increased from now on.

Anyways, as for you all that know my identity, can you guys please properly listen to my opinion……

“It’s alright.”

As she said so, I turned towards Alice, and was met by a smile.

“Everyone else doesn’t know the greatness of milady yet. Among us, we all know that it was the correct decision.”

“……Where’s that confidence from?”

I listened to Alice saying that full of self-confidence.

“From milady’s strength in close combat, and respect for milady’s reasoning prowess.”

No, but it’s really not that great?

Something to this extent should be average.

“Also that milady never overestimates her abilities, both my brother and I sincerely wish to be of service to milady.”

You’re not even embarrassed to be saying so.

“Sigh~, there’s no helping it. For the time being, I’ll think slowly about what the future holds.”

“Sure, there’s no need to rush things! We will be serving milady!”

She was happiest while saying those words.

Basically she’s trying to tell me that I’m not alone.

“Alice, tomorrow I want to explore the city, could you guide me if it’s not too much trouble? I want to see what it’s like out on the streets now.”

Conrad was saying that public order had been bad lately.

While checking out the situation with my own eyes, I can also buy some civilian clothing and sleepwear.

“I understand. Then, after breakfast tomorrow, I’ll guide you around the streets (by the way, doing it like that, wanting to know the situation in the capital immediately, you’re not just earning my brother’s trust, you’re gaining trust from all of us, black knight-sama.) Alright, let’s sleep soundly tonight, and start working hard on gathering information tomorrow!

Chapter 7

Xant: We are assuming direct control for this series. All previous chapters can be found on the project page under Series.
Welcome Leoneiros, our newest translator. This work will be done by MTL, but he puts a lot of effort into it. Please be gentle with the lad!

Leo: Etto~ I look forward to working with with you all! Thanks!

EDIT: I know slothtranslations is working on this, and has up to Chapter 9 as of this post. Problem is, go read it. There are a ton of errors and in general it's poor work. It seems to be their first attempt, so good on them for learning and practicing! But we will continue our work on this series until they pick up quality or someone better than us takes over.

Chapter 7 – Clothing Shop & Information Collection

Metropolitan Street

Having spent the night in the castle and finished breakfast, I applied my armor and left the castle with Alice.

The capital consists of the Castle as the center with the city spreading around it, divided into aptly named districts: North School District, South Market District, East Noble District and West Commoner District.
As the district names state, the North District is where kids go to school from elementary to college. The East District is where the nobles live and the West District is where the commoners live.
We are currently entering the Market District or South District.
A gate and walls separate each district. It's the first time I have entered such a big city.

There's a traveler's inn and a guild located in the South District.
Food and clothing shops are also there, of course. Weapon shops to deal with arms and armor, many general stores to deal with magic items, daily necessities, and furnishings. There are even stores with merchandise that have come from

other countries. Overall, a very crowded place.

"Amazing!" [Chie]

I stated while looking at the neighborhood.

"Yes, there is hardly a single day that it is not crowded in this area." [Alice]

Alice stated as she walked to the right of me dressed in her maid uniform.

The current time is about 10:00am.
The Prince is currently at school which is 5 days a week.
Thankfully the North District supplies schooling for elementary all the way up to college.

In this world there are 7 days in a week.
There are also 365 days in one year.
Surprisingly this world is very similar to Earth in this respect.
It would appear that this world runs on the same time as Earth.
That's where I don't understand some things.

Before I was sent to this world, Amaterasu mentioned this country's security situation.
However, the information Amaterasu gave was different than the current situation.
Amaterasu said I would be sent back 4 years in time during which time Yusuke would be summoned.
So would that mean there is a Yusuke and 13-year-old me back on Earth currently?
My power can rival that of the Demon King, but then why does Yusuke still get summoned?
Maybe Yusuke gets summoned by country that is not confident in their power?
Yusuke is a moron and is gullible… That may be a problem.
Either way, it appears the security situation is cleared up in 4 years.
Even though the security situation will be addressed I still have to get caught up with Yusuke.
It's a complicated feeling.

"Haaa~" [Chie]

“Is there something wrong Black Knight-sama?” [Alice]

Alice heard me let out an involuntary sigh.
It’s not like she could help me with my internal problems anyway.

“No, it’s nothing” [Chie]

“Is that so?” [Alice]

Alice slightly tilted her head with a doubtful expression.

“Yeah. Actually I’m thinking of buying a set of plain clothes. Do you know a good store?” [Chie]

I try to divert the conversation.

Today I came out to gather clothes and information.

Time is precious.

Alice gives a nod and begins to guide me to a clothing store.

///

Clothing Store

I arrived at the clothing store with Alice and we immediately enter.
It’s good that we found one so fast, but how should I say it….

“Umm…I feel like I’m being stared at.” [Chie]

“Probably due to the color of your cloak.” [Alice]

Alice gives a slight giggle while looking at my cloak.
Certainly this store is generally frequented by commoners and travelers.
I have a bright red cloak, which symbolizes my closeness to the royal family.
Entering a place like this would be unusual.
Also, wearing full body black armor to buy household goods.

Definitely too suspicious.

“I just want comfortable clothes to wear, and pajamas. I have no interest in expensive looking fashionable clothes.” [Chie]

If possible I would like to get clothes that are good for wearing under armor. A shirt and pants would be nice.

There is no point in getting shoes, since they change whenever I equip the armor.

“But it would be nice to be fashionable when not in the armor as well.” [Alice]

Alice knows my true gender so she is concerned about my appearance.
Sorry Alice but, I have no interest in a dress.
At home I wore comfortable clothes and jerseys. Fashion was unrelated to my life.
Because of this my whole family would cry.
It’s just, rather than buy clothes with my pocket money, I thought games, manga, and imitation swords were far more exciting.
My brother use to tell me it was a waste but I enjoyed being buried in a room full of ninja goods.

Anyway.

“Alice, I mean to hide my sex not only inside the armor but when I am also without it.” [Chie]

“Well…that is so.” [Alice]

Alice seems convinced but at the same time I feel like I want to drop my shoulders.
Is this…that?
Where in the novels and comics the maid comes out and enjoys dressing up a person like a doll?
Nope. Sorry. Not happening.

I go towards the shelves where men’s clothing is placed.
It would be easier to hide my gender this way. I should choose a bland color like black or brown.
From behind the shelf I can see Alice’s gaze full of complaints but I’ll just ignore it.
4 pieces of plain clothes and 2 black pajamas.
I need a robe to be on the safe side. Just in case I am in a situation where I can’t wear the armor and I still need to cover my head and face.
A bland color so I can stay inconspicuous would be best.
It will need to be durable but light so it’s easy to move in.

“Excuse me.” [Chie]

“Y-Yes!” [Female Clerk]

I call over the clerk to find out what would be best.
It’s a woman with long straight red hair in her early 20’s.
She seemed panicked and came in a hurry.

“D-Did you need something?” [Female Clerk]

Her voice shaking.
Somehow, I’m feeling guilty.

“I would like a robe that is durable yet easy to move in.” [Chie]

The clerk began shuffling around the clothes searching for a robe that fit my description.

“This robe was woven from the feathers of a Gryphon! It has a magic resistance boost and is light yet durable.” [Female Clerk]

She stretched out the dark brown robe before me.
I took it from her to examine it. Definitely light and sturdy.

“I’ll take it along with these.” [Chie]

“C-Certainly!” [Female Clerk]

The clerk takes all of the clothes and heads to the register, however….

“Kyaaa!” [Female Clerk]

—-Foompf!

The female clerk manages to trip and stumble.
Clothes, robe, and clerk all fall to the floor.
At the sight, all the people around start to turn pale. Well more like blue-green.
Alice and I immediately go to the place the clerk fell.

“Ah!…Um!…I-I’m terribly sorry!” [Female Clerk]

The female clerk was trembling terribly.
I hold out my right hand to the clerk.

“Are you hurt?” [Chie]

“EH?!” [Female Clerk]

She probably thought I was angry judging by the blank look on her face.
I ask in as much of a gentle voice as possible.

“No need to be afraid. Are you uninjured?” [Chie]

“Y-Yes, um…” [Female Clerk]

She timidly reaches up and takes my hand then rises.
Meanwhile Alice quickly collects the clothes that were scattered around the floor and takes them to the register.

“Ah! I’ll get you different ones.” [Female Clerk]

The clerk approaches the register in a panic.

“I don’t mind. These are fine.” [Chie]

“Um…You still want these?” [Female Clerk]

The female clerk appears to be uneasy.

“Yes they are fine. I seem to be the cause of the situation anyway.” [Chie]

The female clerk enters a state of panic.

“S-Such a thing!” [Female Clerk]

“It’s alright. I insist it was my fault.” [Chie]

I try to pacify the clerk to calm her down.
Then all of a sudden from the back of the shop…

“GAHAHAHAHAHA! That is quite the display!” [???]

A man was carrying on with a loud laughter.
A man with short messy red hair and small mustache. He had furrowed brows and eyes similar to a villainous person.
He had a height of 190 kuameito (cm) and judging by his looks, he seems to be around 50. Though he is an uncle his body is built like an athlete, full of muscles.

“Hello Byron-san.” [Alice]

“Oh? Well if it isn’t Alice-chan.” [Byron]

Alice seems to be good friends with this uncle.

“This person is Byron Ozuri and is the manager of this shop. Byron this person is Black Knight-sama whom I now serve.” [Alice]

Alice gave out the introductions.

“You can just call me Byron.” [Byron]

Byron holds out his right hand while showing his white teeth and laughing.

“Nice to meet you Byron-san. I apologize ahead of time but circumstances prevent me from revealing my name. I hope you forgive me.” [Chie]

I remove my gauntlet and shake his hand.
By the way, as long as it’s just the hand the gender won’t be revealed. Such splendid armor.
Byron stiffens up a bit and seems to be surprised by something.
Looking around, several people inside and outside of the store are looking rather stupefied.
I wonder if I have done something unusual again.
I look to Alice but she is just smiling while looking at me.
I wonder.

“GAHAHAHAHAH! You sure don’t act how you look!” [Byron]

–Bashin! –Bashin!

Byron pats my shoulder with his left hand and laughs once again excitedly.
Did I do something?

“To have come to this city with the Black Unicorn, wear a red cloak, and come to this shop, I thought I was dreaming.” [Byron]

To think so many problems could occur just from shopping and shaking hands. Not to mention the poor clerk.
Apparently the Unicorn legend is a bigger deal than I thought.

“No, but, I think this is normal?” [Chie]

While being shocked with Byron’s attitude I reply back to soothe the situation. However, contrary to what I thought, Byron grabs both of my shoulders and faces me away. He then shouts to the onlookers.

“Hey everyone! This is how the legendary knight acts! Even though he was

chosen by the black unicorn he shops like one of us!” [Byron]

“Oooooo!” [Onlookers]

The words said by Byron make the onlooker’s voice out in admiration.
Why do they do this?

“You know Byron, the Black Knight-sama was nominated Knight Commander by my brother Conrad. Black Knight-sama carries the hopes of the Imperial family. I can be proud to serve him.” [Alice]

Hey! Don’t say such a thing in this place now!

“All you hear that! The Empire’s strongest knight backed by the royal family came all the way to my shop to buy clothes!” [Byron]

All it took was that.

“Sir Knight! By all means come also to my shop!” [???]

“Sir Knight, come to my grocery store!” [???]

“Come to my weapons shop! I have the best weapons!” [???]

One after the other people begged me to come to their stores.
And at that time I came to be called “Sir Knight” in the West Commoner and South Market Districts.
You know, I’m a woman. Not a sir. Oh well.
After a few minutes the commotion finally settled down. I was finally able to finish my purchase at the register.

“That will be 1 silver plate and 5 silver in total.” [Female Clerk]

The money of this world is copper, copper plate, silver, silver plate, gold, and gold plate.
Comparing to Earth, copper is 10 yen, copper plate 100 yen, silver 1000 yen, silver plate 10,000 yen, gold 100,000 yen, and gold plate 1,000,000 yen.
The shape and size of the copper, silver and gold is about the same as a 10-yen coin. Plates are about the size and shape of a 500-yen coin.
So it came to about 15,000 yen.
I take two silver plate from the brown bag given to me by Amaterasu.
It is packed full of silver plate.

I counted before going to bed and it was at least 100 silver plates.
In hindsight it was a good thing it was silver plate and not gold plate.
The problems I would have faced while shopping with only gold plates.

"Byron, has there been any problems around the capital recently?" [Chie]

I asked Bryon while the clerk handed me 5 silvers.
Byron seems to be trusted and popular with the people of this district.

"Hrmm…" [Byron]

Byron seems to be thinking while he crosses his arms in front of his chest.

"There has been talk of some young people going missing recently." [Byron]

"Young people? Roughly how old are these people that go missing?" [Chie]

"From children of about 10 years of age to young adults of 20." [Byron]

"Males and females?" [Chie]

"Aye. Probably being taken as slaves by slave merchants or the Thieves Guild." [Byron]

Slave traders?

"Slavery is…I was certain in the Empire it was abolished more than 100 years ago." [Alice]

It seems in the Holy Kingdom it is still prominent but it has been abolished in the Empire.
The reason is the royalty here hates discrimination.
Although there are different social standings between nobility and commoners it is more of a give-and-take relationship. The royal family and nobles protect the country while the commoners work the land.
There are some nobles that look down on the commoners but it's a small part.
It is precisely because the empire is such a country that the idea of slavery never set root.
So why slave traders?

"Certainly the empire has prohibited slaves but we have heard rumors of an underground auction since 3 years ago." [Byron]

“Auction?!” [Chie]

What an unpleasant feeling.

“My brother tried to gather information about it also but could never get any solid evidence.” [Alice]

“The entrance would need to be located in a back alley or back side of town.” [Chie]

Back alleys and such are often where the more unsavory people hang out.
The Thieves guild probably has their base there also.

“If the auction is somewhere it is probably being supported by someone with power such as a noble. Their strong influence would help in keeping the location secret and the information about it nonexistent.” [Chie]

“You think so? If it is a noble then it could be anyone involved in the politics of the country you think?” [Byron]

I shake my head to Byron’s words and Alice explains.

“Just because someone is a noble doesn’t mean they are involved in politics.” [Alice]

“Is that so?” [Byron]

Byron answers Alice with eyes wide open.
It can’t be helped, most commoners wouldn’t know much about nobility.
Alice continues the explanation.

“When you say ‘noble’ it can mean Grand Duke, brother of the Emperor, a King or Saint, Royals, Holy Family or head of a branch. A duke is to the Imperial and Royal family while a Holy person is comparable to that of a great patrician. Black Knight-sama here is similar to someone of this position.” [Alice]

“Hoooo!” [Byron]

Byron lets out an exclamation as he looks at me.
It’s not like I’m happy about it.
Alice continues on.

“There are also Earls or persons with fiefs. Viscounts are nobles with land.

Baron is the lowest noble. Others are called junior nobility. Incidentally my brother Conrad is a Baron.” [Alice]

Baron Conrad?

“Although he was mischievous as a boy long ago, now he is the most successful of the commoners!” [Alice]

“Conrad was a delinquent?” [Chie]

That serious looking Conrad?
I can’t imagine.

“Yes, very bad.” [Alice]

“Very bad?!” [Chie]

If it’s enough to have his sister say so then I can’t imagine anymore.
This is interesting!

“Alice, let me hear more of this in detail later!” [Chie]

“Yes, I would be glad to.” [Alice]

I’m looking forward to it.
Well, I digress.

“Well, that being the case of nobility. From the before mentioned Grand Duke to the earlier said Baron only the most outstanding among them is chosen for political parliament. So being noble doesn’t necessarily mean you are involved in politics.” [Alice]

“Oh, so that is how it is.” [Byron]

Byron said while impressed.

“With the earlier things stated, a person with strong influence being needed to carry out such a crime is not uncommon. Rather, a large scale crime such as slave auction, it is natural to think someone with a lot of influence is involved and that person is probably the mastermind.” [Chie]

First things first.

“Up to this point our target hasn’t been narrowed down. The best way is to enlist help.” [Chie]

Even I have limits when alone.
We will need Conrad to help us.

“Alice, let us return to the castle soon. I need you to take me to Conrad.” [Chie]

“Yes, but do you not need to rest?” [Alice]

Alice is concerned of my well-being because of all the stuff that has been happening the last two days.
Certainly a day of rest would be nice but with the current situation….
This has clearly been going on for the last 3 years so I would rather solve this problem immediately.

“More than that, I don’t care for this situation. There is a need to address this matter as soon as possible.” [Chie]

“As you wish.” [Alice]

“If you hear anything more contact the castle.” [Chie]

Anything would help.
It’s possible that the military is not aware but if you are a commoner you would hear more.

“Aye, sure thing.” [Byron]

Alice and I leave the shop with our luggage as we hurry back to the castle.

Chapter 8

Xant:

My god, so much text…and the wording is weird in some places. Meh.

I guess I should also formally announce that we're working together with Re:Translations. See Rei? I did it.

In other news, HTG is officially dropped by Sneak and myself, Sneak has chosen a new series and will begin working on it asap (tomorrow, so he said). 9 may pursue this in the future, but with the Kansu chapters as of current…

Anyhow, enjoy this chapter. It's actually the longest chapter I've worked on so far for Lazy9.

Chapter 8

Military Exercise Area

-Conrad's POV-

Presently, I am in the castle exercise grounds watching the soldiers train with the other captains.

"What of it, Conrad?" [Adolf]

With long blue hair bundled at the bottom and standing at 180 «kaumeito» (cm) tall was a man named Adolf Addinsell.
His blue eyes looked upon me.
He was wearing white padded armor, which was under brown leather armor. He wore black leather pants with short black boots.
(ED: This is a Gambeson, a padded defensive jacket)
He wore a dark green cloak on his back.
He has a nice and well-groomed face, judging by his popularity with the maidservants and young ladies of the city.
He is the Captain of the Archer Corps and the same age as I am, 24.

"Well, what do you think of it?" [Conrad]

I put the question to Adolf, even though I can roughly guess the answer.

“This Black Knight is such a mysterious person, to be appointed Knight Commander and also a direct knight to the Royal Family, so I’ve been told!” [Celestia]

So says Celestia Avary.
She is junior nobility, as well as the eldest daughter of the Avary family and Captain of the Spear Corps.
Her short and wavy golden hair paired with her pale face could classify her as a beautiful woman.
She glared at me with her purple eyes.

She wore silver scale armor and gauntlets with a brown leather skirt, on her feet were high-heel iron boots that reached up to her knees.
Her cloak was a dark blue.
She doesn’t show it with her proud personality and well-toned body, but she’s only 19 years old.
I was slightly annoyed with her way of talking just now.
You don’t insult people, lest it becomes a habit.

“Insults to the Commander will not be forgiven, even for you Celestia.” [Conrad]

“!?” [All]

I give a stern warning in which all eyes present give an expression of surprise. Even from what I said about the Commander, they still seem confused.

“It’s exactly as His Majesty said yesterday. That person is the benefactor of the royal family and I. That’s why Kyle and I petitioned His Majesty about the Commander.” [Conrad]

“But that’s it! For someone so mysterious to receive Red, the position closest to the imperial family…! Even if he was chosen by the legendary black unicorn, I still need proof to be convinced he is worthy of such a position!” [Celestia]

I am shocked to still be unable to convince her.

“So much shouting for such a beautiful woman.” [Adelbert]

The one with an affectionate tone is Adelbert Abercrombie, Captain of the Swordsmen Corps.
Short golden hair with blue eyes. A real dandy boy.
He is 23 years old with a height of 175 «kaumeito» (cm), and has a mole under the corner of his left eye.
Wearing silver plate mail with a purple cloak, he is the eldest son of the Abercrombie house and the next family head.
He's a childhood friend of Celestia, as unnatural as that seems for their positions.
His prowess with the sword certainly makes him suitable for the Captain of the Swordsmen but, this guy's character is rather…
Upon our first meeting I was met with some unrestrained and rude words. A typical aristocratic boy.
For the men that belong to the Imperial Army I don't think there is one that doesn't want to punch this guy.
In private he is always surrounded by beautiful women, he is good at smooth talking women.
Although most of the men envy him, I don't particularly care for it.
Someone who only knows to play around…

"It's as Adel says. Calm down little Celes." [Brandon]

The one who tries to soothe Celestia, Brandon Adams.
Captain of the Fighter Corps and oldest amongst us.
A large, rippling man with a height of 190 «kaumeito»(cm).
Brown, wolf-like hair that reaches the back of his neck.
Mean looking brown eyes, tanned brown skin, and a brown cloak to match.
He wore dark green padded armor under a black segmented breastplate, coupled with brown leather pants and black knee high boots.
Contrary to his appearance, he has a good-natured personality.
Though he was born a commoner, Celestia and Adelbert treat him as an older brother.
Many have followed and relied upon this man in times of need.
I as well have relied upon him.

"That…is…so." [Amy]

Amy Arnold said bashfully while fidgeting.

Middle nobility and youngest of three daughters to the Arnold family.
She was wearing an archer hat with a bowed front with red hair that passes in front of the left and right shoulders, along with a light blue robe with a string of embroidered flowers.
She also has glasses on, behind which were red eyes and a plain face.
Short brown boots covered her feet, and an orange cloak flowed from her back.
She is incredibly shy but her magic prowess is the best in the empire.
She is the type that, when needed, has the responsibility to get things done.

"…I'm sorry." [Celestia]

After it being pointed out, Celestia cools her head.

"Regardless, just as Celes said, the fact that we know nothing of this man is something we cannot accept." [Adelbert]

The other Captains nod at the words stated by Adelbert.
It looks as if they all have the same opinion of the new captain.
I would have felt the same had I not seen it.

"Conrad, I also do not trust him. Why do you go so far as to follow him?" [Adolf]

I hear from Adolf.
As friends, we have climbed the ladder to the top together.
However, he is misunderstanding.

"Adolf, I'm not the best knight. I may be better than an ordinary soldier but that is only because of training."

I'm just a commoner trained to be a knight.
Certainly, I was called the strongest so far, but now I question why I was called so.
I'm only an ordinary person who is slightly stronger than most.
It was even clearer yesterday.

"Everyone, listen to me. I am an ordinary human that can be found anywhere." [Conrad]

"For…that…to be…no…such…thing." [Amy]

Amy desperately denies with a face that disapproves of such thoughts.

“It is just as Amy says. An enemy that can match you does not exist!” [Celestia]

So she says.
I return Celestia’s words.

“No. If I am against that person I would surely lose.” [Conrad]

“I have no reason to believe in that!” [Adolf]

I was at a loss for words.
It seems that no matter what I say they are bound to their belief.

“Enough!” [Conrad]

“!?” [All]

I involuntarily yelled.
My shout surprises the Captains and the surrounding men suspend their training.
So I say to them.

“I’m glad you think so highly of me but to say ‘There is no enemy that can match me’ is like saying it’s ‘a waste to become stronger’ and I will hear no such words!”

These thoughts have always been on my mind.

“I have put much thought into it. I want to protect the people of this country and so I trained hard, but I am not the only person who put in such effort. Yet, before I knew it, I was called the strongest in the Empire. I am but a commoner yet so much responsibility was placed onto me…. To say I am deserving of such a title, I will not accept it!” [Conrad]

“You…” [Adolf]

Adolf’s small voice leaks out.
Honestly, I never told anyone until now.
It is no wonder they would be surprised.

“The evidence of this was yesterday. When His Majesty and I were attacked by 5 ogres, I used all my strength to protect them but it was not enough.” [Conrad]

Everyone went silent and listened to me with surprised expressions.

“It’s a lie” and “Unbelievable” was written all over their faces.

“When my despair reached its peak for failing to protect His Majesty, I begged for anyone to save His Majesty. That was when ‘He’ appeared.” [Conrad]

I remember that moment and I noticed I had begun to relax again.
At that time I was staring, puzzled at the scene that lay before me.
The Black Knight who seemed to dance across the battlefield while fighting an ogre.

“I thought I had entered a dream when ‘He’ appeared. The black armor that popped out of the forest and saved His Majesty… That person gave us hope when it had been lost.” [Conrad]

I remember the fight between the ogre and the knight at that time.
The knight deliberately provoked the ogre to attack, and then I watched in awe as the knight overwhelmed the ogre with a single arm and a sword.
Even I would not be able to compete with an ogre unless I use both hands.
The knight finally beheaded the ogre with a single move.
Somewhere, at that time, in my heart I already knew.
That person is not an enemy.

“For me, it did not matter if that Black Knight was chosen or not. At that moment I strongly felt that I wanted to follow that person.” [Conrad]

I ended up saying and noticed everyone has crowded around.
Silence prevails for a while.
Then suddenly the silence is broken.

“Brother!” [Alice]

It was the voice of my younger sister who became the caretaker of the Commander.
Black armor wearing a red cloak followed her.

“Commander!” [Conrad]

I involuntarily raised my voice.
The Captains around me turned their faces toward me in surprise.

I ignored their faces and move quickly to the Captain.

“Commander! What brings you here?” [Conrad]

I ask the newly appointed Commander.

“Oh, I was coming to ask you about something but what happened? I don’t know what was said but I could hear a voice.” [Chie]

The Commander asked in the low voice of a man.
It seems my voice was carried outside.
I am relieved the contents were not known.
I don’t want to seem undignified in front of this person.
I tighten my face.

“Nothing. It was not an issue.” [Conrad]

“My brother is glad that Black Knight-sama has come, isn’t that right?” [Alice]

My sister is quite sharp.

“…” [Chie]

The Commander tilts her head in confusion.

“Then Commander, you wanted…” [Conrad]

“You’re the Black Knight?” [Adelbert]

When I tried to ask the Commander, Adelbert interrupted.
This inconsiderate man.

“Yes, and you are?” [Chie]

The Commander says while watching Adelbert.

“I am Adelbert Abercrombie, Swordsmen Captain.”

Adelbert says while extending his right hand.
Hey, normally you would take the gauntlet off beforehand.

“I’m sorry, but my face and real name will remain hidden.” [Chie]

The Commander says while removing her gauntlet and taking Adelbert’s outstretched hand.
As one would expect of the Commander.

It shows her true personality.

"*Snort*" [Adelbert]

While shaking hands with the Commander, Adelbert laughed through his nose. To be exact, he was shaking the Commander's right hand.

"Something the matter?" [Chie]

The Commander asks Adelbert.

"No, I just thought your hands were rather rugged and seedy." [Adelbert]

This bastard!

What a thing to say to the Commander.
Certainly the hand of the Commander will be a far cry from the soft hand of a city woman. You can tell just by looking.
They are the same hands that a variety of men have, but there are some things that are just bad to say.
The Captains behind Adelbert expressed agreement with what he said.
However the subordinates and I who were with His Majesty yesterday spew murderous intent toward Adelbert.
Alice and I glare at Adelbert, though he doesn't let go of the hand.

"I never expected that the Black Knight that was chosen would have such a pitiful hand. I'm sorry." [Adelbert]

The Commander remained silent.
Any more than this and I won't be able to stand it.
Likewise, Alice is clenching her hands tightly.
I send her a signal with my eyes; "One more rude word and I'm beating him half to death."

Alice reads it correctly and nods. That's my sister.

"Wake up Conrad. You'll end up at the bottom of the knights if you follow this one. Do you no longer know what is right? Aside from being a fool." [Adelbert]

Time for a beating.
I take a step closer to Adelbert.
However, in the next moment.

—Baakonnt!

“Guafut!” [Adelbert & Brandon]

It happened in an instant.
The Commander removed her hand from Adelbert and punched him in the face.
The blow had put Adelbert into a stupor and he fell backward into Brandon.

“Phew” [Chie]

The Commander let out a breath while putting her gauntlet back on.
I was taken aback.
The Commander appeared calm but was clearly angry.
I couldn’t see her face from the helmet but I understood the atmosphere.

“You!” [Brandon]

Adelbert, beaten, was set on the ground by Brandon. He then flew toward the Commander in anger.

“…Geez.” [Chie]

Rather than panic the Commander kept a cool head and let out a murmur.
And…

—Gashi~tsu!

“What?!” [Brandon]

“Oryaaa!” [Chie]

—Dosshin~tsu!

Brandon’s right arm and left side collar is grabbed by the Commander. She then quickly changes orientation with her right hand still holding onto the collar. Brandon’s charge is changed and he is thrown to the ground. (ED: typical judo throw)
That was a spectacular move. Was it a skill?

“Ugh…” [Brandon]

He probably received a significant impact to the back.
Brandon is still lying on his back with a distorted face.

“This bastard?!” [Adolf]

Now Adolf is holding a bow and arrow pointed toward the Commander.
It's his specialty. Arrows strengthened with ice magic!

"Adolf, stop!" [Conrad]

I yell at Adolf to try and make him stop.

"You idiot! Two Captains were just beaten down! This guy!" [Adolf]

It's useless.
The blood goes straight to his head. He is no longer his usual self.
Just like I was a long time ago, a fool.
In this state he is unstoppable, even by me.
This is bad.
Just as I was going to warn the Commander,

"Tch…you a kid? This guy." [Chie]

I did not call out to her because the atmosphere of the Commander changed.
My intuition trained through combat is telling me to not talk to this person right now.
Alice sensed this as well.
She evacuated to one of the corners.
I always thought the danger detection of that girl was awesome.
Being around danger when we were younger I would take her quickly to a safe spot.
It seems that it stuck with her.
Being half respecting and half amazed at the reaction speed of my sister, Adolf lets loose an ice arrow.
However, it fails to hit the Commander.

"It's gone?!" [Adolf]

"…." [Chie]

The ice arrow that Adolf shot is smashed by the sword that was pulled out faster than the eye could see.
Adolf was surprised. His face showed that he did not understand the situation.
Adolf silently looks at the Commander who suddenly kicked off from the ground at a speed that was hard for the eye to follow.

The back part of the blade was pressed against his throat before Adolf could even react to the movement.

"Spectacular.." [Alice & Conrad]

Alice and I involuntarily muttered to ourselves.
Muttering about it and all, it really was great.

"…Are you done?" [Chie]

"…" [Adolf]

To the cold voice of the Commander, Adolf gives a nod in silence.
The Commander saw it and returned the sword to its sheath making a metallic sound.
Hearing the sound, Adolf's legs gave out and he landed on his butt.
There was a look of fear in his face and he looked to be trembling.
The Commander turned her back to Adolf, who was sitting and holding his face, and walked toward Adelbert.

"Don't come!" [Adelbert]

The sight of the original Swordsmen Captain is nowhere to be found.
For one who looked so noble, he now looks incompetent and run down.
The Commander walked silently up to Adelbert, I didn't try to stop her.
No, I couldn't stop her.
The sheer difference in power between the Commander and I was felt in the atmosphere.
Adelbert was completely terrified once the Commander stopped in front of him.

—Gashi~tsu!

The Commander grabbed Adelbert's white shirt from under his armor and forced him up.

"…Do you understand the reason why I am angry?" [Chie]

It was a cold voice that crawled across the skin.
Adelbert is trembling with chattering teeth and a blue face.
It's the situation when you can't even speak due to fear.

"Tch…pathetic." [Chie]

At the appearance of Adelbert the Commander spits out her words.

“I knew you lot did not like me from the start so for good or bad I thought to put up with it in the beginning.” [Chie]

The Commander continued in a cold, deep voice.

“Face and body completely hidden by black armor. Such a suspicious person is given a red cloak, given the position of Duke and then title of Knight Commander by the royal family. It would be obvious to cause frustration. Such a person would never be accepted!” [Chie]

“Hee!” [Adelbert]

The Commander yelled and Adelbert gave out a shudder.
All the people in this place did the same.

“If it was only your attitude towards me I would have endured it. However, I dare say, what is with you? Is it not common sense to shake hands bare-handed? Then talking about my hand in a condescending way. Certainly my hand is rugged and far from elegant but is it common to look down on someone for such? Know some boundaries!” [Chie]

“…” [Adelbert]

Adelbert nodded shaking his head like a broken toy.

“The next insult I could not endure. I care not of the things said about me. There are reasons you should feel that way but…” [Chie]

The Commander squeezed her left hand into a fist.
What the Commander said next, I was at a loss for words.

“Conrad is unrelated to the problem between us!” [Chie]

To everyone that heard it their eyes opened wide.
No, only Alice is watching while smiling happily.

“Conrad at the bottom of the knights? To take him for a fool? Such things from a stupid swordsman! Only a fool would agree with you! He is a person who desperately defended everyone from ogres with all that he had! A person who is kind and dependable! I may have just met him and not know him that well but I know this! Compared to you he is by far a better man!” [Chie]

After saying so the Commander releases Adelbert.
Adelbert once again fell to the ground.

“Understand?! From now on I dare you to speak ill of others! When you do I’ll remove your head from your torso!”

“Y-Yes!” [Adelbert]

The Commander stood with her index finger pointing at Adelbert for the reply.

“Alright!” [Chie]

Satisfied the Commander turns her back toward Adelbert and begins walking toward me.
All the anger disappeared and she was back to her original atmosphere.

“I’m sorry Conrad. I seem to have stirred up some trouble.” [Chie]

The Commander apologized in the ordinary low voice of a man.

“It’s understandable for you to be angry! Had you not done so, Alice and I would have beaten him half to death!” [Conrad]

“…Eh? Alice?” [Chie]

From what I said about Alice, was it strange for the Commander?
She tilted her head and gave off a puzzled atmosphere.
This person apparently exhibits her emotions through her atmosphere.
In a way it makes her easy to understand, is it deliberate?

“Yes. Did you think she was just a maidservant of the castle? I am not sure where she learned it but she is a master of unarmed-combat. She is on the same level as the Captain’s you fought earlier.” [Conrad]

“Hoooh…” [Chie]

Perhaps she is making a cramped face under the helm?
I get afraid whenever my sister makes the same face.

“I thought about it yesterday. Exactly what are the maidservants of the castle?” [Chie]

“Well, um….” [Conrad]

I’m sorry Commander.

That’s a mystery even amongst our men.
Awfully early to work and decent combat ability….

“Oh, what was it you wanted to talk about?” [Conrad]

Thinking about it is scary so I decided to ask about her reason to visit.

“Oh, that’s right. Conrad, I heard about the rumors of a slave auction in the capital and I wanted more information. Do you know anyone I could talk to?” [Chie]

“Eh!? Certainly you were given a day to rest by His Majesty? I didn’t think you would use it to gather information on your own!” [Conrad]

This person, I didn’t think she would already be working.

“Oh, I wanted to buy some clothes and look at the current situation in the capital with my own eyes. In my country there is a saying, ‘Seeing is believing’.” [Chie]

A word I am not familiar with, I give a quizzical look.
What is a ‘saying’?

“Commander, a saying?” [Conrad]

I ask the question to the Commander.

“Saying is a phrase used since ancient times that represents a shrewd observation of daily life. ‘Seeing is believing’ means that rather than listen to others it is better to see for yourself so you can understand.” [Chie]

I see.

“It’s a great word isn’t it?” [Chie]

Certainly words to admire.

“Truly is Commander. I understand, I will call some men whom we can trust. Please wait in your room.” [Conrad]

“Thank you very much. Sorry for troubling you.” [Chie]

But I would like to apologize to the Commander who apologized to me.

“No! It is my duty as your subordinate.” [Conrad]

“Oh, Conrad? I think that type of speech is better, don’t you?”

She tilts her head and suddenly says.

“When we first met you talked to me casually but then in the middle of it you switched to formal? I thought that was your own thing but you switched back to casual just now so that means we have become closer for which I am glad.”
Eh!

What did she say!?

“Well that’s that. From now on you will use casual speech in front of me.” [Chie]

“No, to say such things!?” [Conrad]

“That’s the way it is. Well, I’m going to head back to my room.” [Chie]

So she said then left the training field with Alice.
So fast!

“To…cool” [Amy]

As I was taken aback looking at where they left I heard Amy from behind.
When I looked back she was holding her reddened cheeks with both hands.

“To see such a thing! To think I doubted that person a little while ago!” [Celestia]

Next to Amy stands Celestia with reddened cheeks and clasped hands.
Both of them seem to be excited.
Apparently the two that watched the performance just now have come to realize the elegance of the Captain.

“…Conrad, that knight.” [Adolf]

Before I realized, Adolf had come beside me and mentions the Commander.
Brandon seems to have come to his senses, Adelbert is still sitting down while Celestia and Amy look toward me.
The gazes of all those present have fallen upon me.
To them I grin and laugh proudly.

“That person is indeed the legendary Black Knight! The person who yelled at

His Majesty and I!”

Chapter 9

Xant: Thank you Draco for doing the editing. Oh man, so much to do these days. And these chapters are just too long!

Update on the other series:

ID – Senna has been swamped by real life and her car broke down recently >_>

Garudina – Whenever Ash is done doing his tl.

Astarte – Whenever Ash is done Garudina.

Kansu – Whenever 9 decides to give us chapters~

??? – Sneak is hard at work on this, I don't even know what it is…he said it should be done very soon though.

Chapter 9 – Organizing the Situation and Hypothesis

Chie's Work Room

Parting ways with Conrad, I returned to my room embarrassed.
Certainly I got involuntarily angry, hit that stupid swordsman, slammed the muscular guy on the ground, and put the sword to that long, blue haired good-looking guy, but that's not what I'm embarrassed about.
The problem is after that!

Never in my entire life have I shouted out in front of a crowd like that! It was so embarrassing!
At the time, my blood was rushing to my head, but now I realize what I actually said…
Those things I said about Conrad!
What was that!?
Was I trying to woo him!?

I was just trying to explain that I preferred the casual way of talking between us rather than formal. I only meant to force the issue as a joke. There were no ulterior motives! Definitely!

I know what it is!
I just haven't had many opportunities to talk with many people until now so I am bound to say something embarrassing. Yep that's it.

As I was reasoning to myself.

—Con! Con!

I hear a knock on the door.
I came back from my thoughts and moved to open the door.

Sounds from the room can't be heard outside but from inside I can still hear them.
To be able to apply this world's magic in such ways is really convenient.
I wonder if I can change the settings to hear from outside once you knock.
Right now, it just seems improper.
When I opened the door Alice, who had gone to retrieve a map of the Empire, was standing there.

"Black Knight-sama, the map." [Alice]

Alice passes me a piece of paper that has been rolled into a tube.

"Thank you." [Chie]

I thank Alice as she hands it to me and I spread the map out on the large work desk.
As expected, it's not as detailed as a modern Earth map.
It looks like one of those maps attached to the appendix of a game.

"This is the best and latest map. Is it good enough?" [Alice]

"Oh, no problem." [Chie]

I replied.
Certainly, it could be a bit more detailed, but this is good enough.

"Alice, I would also like to hear of what you know before Conrad comes." [Chie]

"I do not mind, but wouldn't the military people know more?" [Alice]

Alice says while tilting her head to the side.
Certainly one might think so.

“Maybe, but there may also be people who know of things the military don’t.” [Chie]

“How so?” [Alice]

I explain to Alice.

“There is always the probability of someone knowing something but never reporting it. You should always think “what if” and not just think the real answer is what you see.” [Chie]

What if that were the cause.
What if it were him.
What if there was a purpose.
What if it were known.

The possibilities of “if’s” like this are prerequisites to form a hypothesis.
Yusuke was always good at getting caught up in dreadful things.
Always getting stuck up to his neck…
He wasn’t even thinking when he grabbed onto me. I should have just ran. His action ended up causing my death.
Alas, I survived so I can always appreciate that.
That guy, he’s only here to beat up the enemy while I just ensure a safe route.
Ah~ This is the worst.

“Black Knight-sama?” [Alice]

“!?” [Chie]

Ah, I was caught up in remembering old things that are best kept silent.
Alice curiously looks at me.
It’s meaningless, what’s important now is the kidnapping.

“I’m sorry. Well, it’s fundamental to think the way I said a while ago.” [Chie]

I apologize quickly and return to the story.

“Oh! Certainly if you think about it, they may not know everything! As expected of Black Knight-sama!” [Alice]

Once again I was praised.
How many times has it been today?

I’m just thinking normally though.

“I want to know about the rumors.” [Chie]

Alice talks about what we know.

“As we heard from Byron-san at the clothing store, young men and women from several villages and towns have gone missing in the past three years. The age of the missing people ranges from 10-year-old children to young adults in their 20’s.” [Alice]

“Huh? Is it okay to assume that children below age 10 and adults above 30 are safe?” [Chie]

I pose the question to Alice.

“Well, I am not sure since the information is based on rumor.” [Alice]

That is true.

“Thank you and continue.” [Chie]

“Yes. The kidnappings have been occurring to the east of the capital located mostly in villages near the border.” [Alice]

Alice points east of the capital on the map near the border where there are a lot of villages located.

“What is the characteristic of this area? For example the population or what is popular?” [Chie]

I request detailed information about a particular village.

“Well…the population is only about 1,000 people and mainly grows polon fruit.” [Alice]

Polon is a sweet fruit that is red and round.
Generally eaten as a snack.
Also used in the ingredients of cake.
It’s a strawberry…

“I see. Since the vicinity is surrounded by a forest it is likely to be the Shadow Guild rather than the Thieves Guild.” [Chie]

“That is all I know so far.” [Alice]

So Alice ends the explanation.
Admittedly, there is not enough to form a hypothesis.
The only thing is to wait for Conrad to come.

—Con! Con!

Whoa!
Good timing!
Alice moves to open the door.
I change the barrier to allow entry.

“Everyone, we’ve been waiting.” [Alice]

“Alice, thank you.” [Conrad]

Conrad enters the room.

“Commander, 4 subordinates, and I have brought the 5 Captains.” [Conrad]

“Thank you very much Conr….5 Captains?” [Chie]

You mean 5 people…
I have an unpleasant feeling.
As Conrad enters the room 5 people follow suit.

“…..” [Captains]

Watching the 3 people come in I give a frown.
However, my face is hidden by my helmet.

“Haa~” [Chie]

“What! You! We come in and you sigh!” [Adelbert]

So says the blonde, stupid swordsman whose face I smashed.
A bandage strip on the nose, he looks like a foolish character that has come out of a cartoon.

“Of course I will give out a sigh. I won’t say I dislike the stupid swordsman who has no manners, the muscle bound brother who acts rashly, and the long, blue haired ikemen who acts like a child and lets the blood go to his head, but I had hoped not to see your faces for a while…haaa~” [Chie]

Having said this, I breathed another sigh.

The 3 grimace upon my words.
They do not return my words.

“Sorry Commander, these three people didn’t know their place and caused a fuss.” [Conrad]

Says Conrad with a fed-up face.
Apparently, they came by force.
Well, it’s inevitable.

“Understood. Well, if I were you, what things would you need to know? Ah, I will introduce myself. I am the Black Knight. I was appointed Knight Commander and exclusive royal knight by His Majesty yesterday. I may be strange looking but I am not an enemy of this country. I cannot reveal my identity to you so I thank you for your discretion.” [Chie]

It was my normal self-introduction.

“….” [Captains]

Other than Conrad and Alice, everyone returns a blank stare.

“…What is it?” [Chie]

I ask them.
It was just a self-introduction, what’s with the faces?
People in this country are much too surprised.

“No…for a Duke, I don’t think you would introduce yourself that way.” [Adolf]

Blue, long haired ikemen guy said.
Whatever, I will act how I want to act in front of other people.

“Normally, when you introduce yourself to someone you should show respect to the other party? My status matters not. It is common sense as a human being, but not so obvious for a certain stupid swordsman.” [Chie]

“Tch…” [Adelbert]

With a distorted face, the swordsman responds to my sarcastic retort.
His good-looking face has turned ugly.

“Hey, I did it. Now you.” [Chie]

I'd like to get on to the agenda as quickly as possible so I ask them to start introductions.
Perhaps because of a bad mood, my wording is getting worse.
I'll have to be careful.
I have to maintain my guy tone.
There is still some discomfort.

"I know. I'm Adolf Addinsell. Archer Captain." [Adolf]

So the blue, long-haired ikemen guy says.
There was no respect or disrespect in his words so I don't say anything.
Rather, it gives off a feeling of a veteran talking to a newcomer.

"I'm Brandon Adams. Fighter Corps Captain." [Brandon]

Muscle-brother says.
I didn't notice before, but what a large person.
Well, I was able to throw this person…
Was that also thanks to this body?

"…I'm Adelbert Abercrombie. Captain of the Swordsmen Corps and heir to the 'large noble' Abercrombie house." [Adelbert]

Awfully stressing the 'large noble' part there idiot swordsman.
After all, I think it's just stupid.

"My name is Celestia Avary! Spear Captain! Please call me Celes, Black Knight-dono!!" [Celesia]

Said the beautiful woman with short, wavy blonde hair in a very powerful manner.
This person, is she going to speak to me with honorifics?
So robust.

"How you took out those 3 Captains in mere seconds with such skill, I was most impressed!" [Celestia]

"That, ah~…" [Chie]

I have no idea how to reply.
I just thought of the combat animation in games and tried to move like that.

“When I saw that movement I was so shocked I couldn’t move from my spot! It was such a shame it was over in just a few seconds!” [Celestia]

She says all fired up.

“Then, shouting at Adel, I was touched by your words! Rather than the ones thrown at you, your anger was directed at the insults thrown at Conrad which shows your great personage!”

“Oh, Celes it is then! Also there is no need for honorifics! …Celes…sorry but perhaps we can talk about this some other time as time is short.” [Chie]

I said in order to stop her.

“Yes! Also, I’m sorry…” [Celestia]

Celes said shyly with a bright red face.
She was so cute you could take a picture.
It’s cute, but I don’t think I could pull it off…
Somehow, it’s become sad.

“We will speak later at length…” [Chie]

“Yes!!” [Celestia]

I take good care of friendly people, but why are you happily blushing Celes?
Is it the voice?
Is it the delusion that under the helm is a good-looking man with a handsome voice?
Or purely the respect for my combat ability…
Let’s pray that it is the latter.
Xant: Oh my fuck I swear to god if this is yuri

“I-I…am…Amy Arnold. C-Captain…of the…Mages!” [Amy]

A long, red haired girl with round glasses said intermittently.
Going by looks, I appear to be slightly older?

“Thank you. Arnold-san.” [Chie]

I remove the right gauntlet and hold out my hand.
A while ago I was told by a stupid swordsman, but my hand really is dry and lumpy. I’m losing confidence as a woman….

Or maybe, it's just not a likeable hand or so I thought.

"Ah…Y-Yes! Amy…is…fine. Please…talk…to me…casually." [Amy]

Joyfully she clasped my hand with both of hers and insisted I call her by name. What a cute person.

"Very well, Amy." [Chie]

When I said so Amy returned a smile that bloomed like flowers.
This person is absolutely a healing character.
But, this person's blush is also on my mind.
Let's hope things here are also born from respect.
I don't have that hobby.
I prefer handsome men.

"Commander, about the frequent missing persons, we will report on this incident." [Conrad]

So says Conrad.
It seems only the Captains will be introduced.
I put my gauntlet back on.

"Understood. Tell us what you know." [Chie]

When I say so the man who appears to be in his late 20's with short brown hair and brown cloak came forward.

"First, I would like to report. The age of the missing men and women are from 10 to 20-years-old. People in their late teens to late 20's have been said to leave the village and never return. The children in their early teens aren't permitted to leave and therefore have been assumed to been kidnapped internally." [Subordinate A]

"So children younger than 10 and people older than 30 are safe?" [Chie]

I pose the same question I asked of Alice.

"Yes, the missing people are only 10-years-old to late 20's." [Subordinate A]

Hmmm, I wonder if there is some meaning behind the age?

Now, a man who looks to be in his late teens, wearing dark green padded

armor and golden hair down to his neckline speaks.

“To strengthen security of the towns and villages, a powerful mage was hired but was unable to come up with a lead.” [Subordinate B]

The man bows then a woman in her early 20’s with light blue hair and wearing full armor speaks.

“In the past, soldiers sent to track down leads were found with their throats slit or torn out. Probably by means of an assassin.” [Subordinate C]

“Any other injuries?” [Chie]

“No, other than the throat, there were no other signs of resistance.” [Subordinate C]

Indeed, a professional assassin would be the likely cause of such a death. Their throats were probably slit before they even realized.

“Throughout the Empire, people frequently go missing, but the most popular location is south of the city next to the thriving commercial city of Azuri.” [Subordinate D]

“Eh?” [Chie]

To the words of the man who looks 30 with short brown hair and wearing armor, I let out a strange voice.
Even Alice has a surprised look on her face.
The other people in the room wear expressions of not understanding.

“Is there a problem Commander?” [Conrad]

Conrad asks.

“No, it’s just Alice told me a little while ago that most of the missing people were from villages and towns located to the east of the capital.” [Chie]

“What!?” [Conrad]

Conrad is surprised and raises his voice.

“Alice, is that true!?” [Adolf]

The blue long haired ikemen guy draws closer to Alice.

“Ah, yes. That is what I heard previously from some of the maids. Some of the maids know of and talk to the military men from there.” [Alice]

Alice responded to the blue-haired ikemen guy.

“Yes, that’s what I thought.” [Chie]

“Yes, just as Black Knight-sama had said.” [Alice]

“What do you think Captain?” [Adolf]

Conrad is listening while tilting his head with a puzzled face.

“Before Conrad came, I asked Alice for reference of what she knows…” [Chie]

“Hmph! Listening to a servant! What was that about a ‘stupid swordsman’!? Who’s the idiot!” [Adelbert]

The stupid swordsman scoffs and interrupts.

At least listen to people till the end!

“I asked Alice as a ‘what if’. There is a probability that someone knows of something but never reported it.” [Chie]

I look at the strained faces in the room.
I continue the explanation.

“In short it’s a hunch. It may seem careless. Rather, where is this town of Azuri?” [Chie]

I ask while looking at the map.

“Around here.” [Conrad]

Conrad points to the town on the map with a finger.

I look where his finger pointed to.

“Ah?” [Chie]

I leak out a voice.

From where he pointed it is close to the border with the Holy Kingdom.

“This is also close to the border?” [Chie]

“Yes, the villages and towns away from the capital and near the borders have

the most victims. This is what our information tells us.” [Conrad]

Conrad answered.

“Commander?” [Conrad]

Even though Conrad spoke to me I remained silent and did not return a reply.
What is it?
I’m stuck on something.
Like something is missing…

“Hm, even though the auction is being held in the city, yet even though we searched for it, nothing was found.” [Brandon]

“That’s right. And there is only one entrance in or out of the city. Somehow they manage to get around the guards.” [Celestia]

I hear the voices of the muscle-brother and Celes and suddenly become worried.
I fold my arms and start thinking.
The kidnappings started 3 years ago.
Young men and women.
Mostly around the border.
The single entrance to the city.
And, the auction.

“!” [Chie]

No way.
I have a hypothesis.

“Commander?” [Conrad]

“Conrad, there is one hypothesis that stands out.” [Chie]

I say inclining my head to everyone.
Well, there is still a part I’m stuck on.

“Why they take people from the border. It’s because it’s near that it’s meaningful.” [Chie]

“Meaning?” [Brandon]

Muscle-brother asks.

“Before I explain it, let’s talk about a hypothesis. Perhaps I am selling slaves to another country. People wanting to do business for profit with me are people with a strong voice in the country and involved with politics.” [Chie]

“Slaves for sale in other countries I can understand, but why do you say they must be involved in politics?” [Celesia]

Celes asks.

“Think about it. Why has there been 3 years of kidnappings but no leads at all? The answer is that someone is manipulating the information.” [Chie]

To be honest, the slave merchants wouldn’t be able to do so much.

“Perhaps the Shadow Guild was hired by the mastermind to dispose of all the things that become the evidence, making it easier to manipulate the information. This guild would be the ones responsible for the assassinations, kidnappings, and hiding the information within the military.” [Chie]

It’s these guys who killed the soldiers who got too close.

“The mastermind hires the Shadow and Thieves Guild to make it easier for the slave merchants to move around. Meanwhile the mastermind keeps most of the profits.” [Chie]

I don’t believe the slave merchants make enough money to hire someone. Manipulating information would be much easier to do if you were involved with politics.

“Next is the auction and the single entrance to the capital. How is it with the tight security the auction is still being held but no one can find any trace of it? Because the people being kidnapped never enter the capital.” [Chie]

“Never enter?” [Adolf]

The long blue haired ikemen guy tilted his head while asking.

“Ha! What stupid things are you saying? So your…” [Adelbert]

“A…puppet…right?” [Amy]

Once again the stupid swordsman who was being a fool was this time blocked

by Amy.
Well done Amy.

“What’s a puppet?” [Celestia]

Celestia asks but I explain instead of Amy who falters with speech.

“A ‘puppet’ can also be called a ‘marionette’. In short it’s a doll. To make a person type doll, use the hair and nails of the person to be the model, insert magic and the doll will become similar to the person it’s modeled after. Normally it is used in a ritual, but to think it would be used like this.” [Chie]

If it were just a doll, it would be easy for it to go in and out of the capital.

“Ritual…” [All]

With the term ‘ritual’, other than Amy and I, the faces of all others twitch.
I can understand your feelings.

“You can use the doll so you don’t have to bring your ‘goods’ into the city.” [Chie]

“So then, where are all the people that were kidnapped!?” [Adelbert]

The stupid swordsman asks a decent question.
I can deal with an ordinary question.

“It was said a while ago. The kidnapped people are being held in the vicinity of the border.” [Chie]

Upon hearing that Conrad wore a look of surprise.

“It all makes sense. Kidnapping in other places than the border to divert attention. The auctions do the same. They were able to keep the confinement location hidden. Why only young men and women are being kidnapped….Ah, I don’t want to think about it when slave merchants are involved but the answer is usually obvious.” [Conrad]

Everyone in the room shows a bitter expression.
Well, it’ll become so if you think about the people that were sold.
I just wish I could of helped sooner.
At any rate.

“This mastermind is out to make a fool of the military.” [Chie]

Everyone looks up to me as I speak.

“Don’t you think so? Openly reveal a slave market in the capital yet not have a single slave step foot in the city. You focus in on it a little bit and you think you know where the confinement is so you take action. Meanwhile you think you put an end to it but you’ve been made a fool.” [Chie]

“…I’m sorry, there’s no excuse.” [Conrad]

Conrad apologizes suddenly.
Perhaps he thought I blamed him.

“Conrad, there is no need to apologize. The investigation was made difficult was it not? For example, the number of people assigned to the investigation was rather low.” [Chie]

“!?” [All]

The Captains, Alice and I view Conrad’s surprised face.

The 4 subordinates wore bitter faces.

“….If you look at it up to this point. The investigation consisted of the 4 subordinates here, Kyle, and I.” [Conrad]

Conrad said quietly.

“I figured as much…I thought it was funny how the information about the locations of the missing people differed between the military and the citizens. This information would have been the most significant in this case. If there were more people involved in this investigation this mistake would not have happened. Also, if it was **just** a few…such as 6 people, you can see why the information would not be easy to get. Actually, to get this far you have done well.” [Chie]

“Yes, the puppet thing you talked about and the missing people being detained at the border, I had roughly predicted to be so.” [Conrad]

“I figured.” [Chie]

When the subject of the ‘puppet’ and ‘near the border’ thing came up and

everyone wore a quizzical face, I saw that Conrad wore a serious expression.

“If I was to go so far as to say what was said is true, do you know of anyone who could be the mastermind?” [Chie]

“Yes, Brattle Ackroyd. A politician. The present head of the large aristocratic Ackroyd house.” [Conrad]

“Praetor Ackroyd!?” [Adolf]
(ED: Roman title)

The long blue haired ikemen guy raised his voice.
The Captains, 4 subordinates, and Alice are all startled.
The reaction must be equivalent to his power.

“With his instructions, the numbers in the investigation team were limited. On my own I went to investigate him. It easily came out, the evidence of his illegal conduct.” [Conrad]

He laughed while he said so.

“I formally appealed to Parliament to officially investigate him. Of course I brought the evidence of fraud and irregularities, but….” [Conrad]

“You couldn’t make them listen…” [Chie]

Conrad shakes his head in silence.

He tightly clasped his hands with a look of frustration and continued.

“‘There is not enough evidence to prove anything’ it seems. At that time, I thought about how all politicians were rotten! The only saving grace is His Majesty. He is the only one to see the truth the same as me. That was when people began targeting the Royal Family.” [Conrad]

—!?

Everyone’s face expressed they were at a loss for words except Conrad and I.

It seems there is a connection.

“I had to act to protect His Majesty, I could no longer focus on the investigation. As a result, the information that His Majesty and I knew about became classified as well the information about the people I was investigating.”

[Conrad]

“I see, despite the difficulties you faced you were still able to maintain a clear head.” [Chie]

Conrad’s ability to calmly analyze things means he was able to easily reach the truth.
He did the same after the ogre attack. At the time I was probably a suspicious person but he was able to determine I was a good person.
At that time, with all that had happened, I couldn’t afford the time to think about the situation.

“No! You think too highly of me!” [Conrad]

Conrad says while being humble.

All that I have said is the truth so I don’t feel any need to be reserved anymore.

“No, Conrad is amazing. Much more than I thought.” [Chie]

“…..(Perhaps this person is unaware)…” [Conrad]

Conrad covers his face with his right palm.
I wonder what’s wrong?

“Hey, what’s the matter with you?” [Chie]

“….Haaa~” [Conrad]

He sighed!

“Seriously, what!? Something I did?” [Chie]

“Fufufu~, Black Knight-sama is dense.” [Alice]

Me, dense!?
Yusuke is ‘dense’, how could I do such a thing!?
I just feel Conrad is super-cool, I wasn’t trying to put on airs!

“No! Alice, I think you are misunderstand….” [Chie]

“Hey, wait!” [Adelbert]

Every time I have something to say, this stupid swordsman.
His interruptions are really getting on my nerves.

“….What?” [Chie]

I was quite irritated and it showed in my voice.

“Uh…Black Knight-san is a man! What’s with all this stuff about being dense!?” [Adelbert]

“Oh?” [All]

…

“!!!” [All]

As he said so the others in the room think back on what was said and express a ‘now that you mention it’ face.

Conrad and Alice show expressions of ‘oh no’.

Meanwhile, I grin under my helmet.

“Oh? But I do not remember saying anything about being a man?” [Chie]

—-!?

I intentionally use my original feminine voice to which everyone is surprised and raises their voices.
Conrad and Alice show a ‘what are you doing!?’ expression of surprise.
Reaction: just as expected. Thank you very much.

“A woman!?” [Adolf]

The blue long haired ikemen guy says while pointing with his right finger.

“Did I say woman?” [Chie]

Now a low man’s voice.

“Which one!?” [Brandon]

Muscle brother cries out.
I never had an experience in teasing people; I found something fun!

“Oh, well a while ago, Alice kept giving me praise so she just meant it in that way. That I was just being shy?” [Chie]
“….(I don’t know)” [Alice & Conrad]

I attempt to explain it off in a way so there are no unnatural ideas about what

Alice said.
What!?
Even though the faces of Alice and Conrad look normal, I feel something from them!
I'm afraid of those two!

"In the end, which is it!?" [Adelbert]

The others don't even notice the change in the other two.
Stupid swordsman has been asking insistently.
The others seem anxious, but I have no intention of telling.
Besides, it's fun!

"Hmm~, I wonder~?" [Chie]

I said flat out in the playful atmosphere.

"Ah~! This guy, repulsive!" [Adolf]

"Hahahahaha!" [Chie]

Hearing the frustrated voice of the blue long haired ikemen guy I happily burst into laughter.
After teasing the three idiots and talking about future plans, the meeting broke up.
Alice and I remain in the room, but before Celes and Amy leave…

"Even if your identity is unknown, it does not change this feeling of respect I have for you!" [Celes]

"I…I also…feel." [Amy]

And exited with shining eyes.
Anyways, since her feelings are born from respect, I am relieved.

Chapter 10

Xant: Thanks, Street Walker, for your help with that one cursed line…
I'd like to welcome Sin to the group as a new proofer as well. She's new to this, so I figured I would give her the biggest project we're running! Great idea!… right? Also, Draco did the editing! It's like I'm not doing any work around these parts~

Draco: I made our new Proofie proof too much…hope she doesn't burn herself out with those tenses….

Neo: I think we both made her proof too much

Chapter 10 – Training & Called Out

Training Grounds

"Yesterday, we may have troubled you and for that I am sorry." [Chie]

It was the day after the discussion of the kidnappings.
Currently, I am in the training grounds standing in front of the soldiers and giving my greeting.

"Once again, I have been appointed Knight Commander and exclusive knight to the Imperial Family. As I am new to this, I thank you ahead of time for your understanding." [Chie]

I say and lower my head.
As I raised my head and looked around… …All the soldiers present expressed silent astonishment.

"Conrad, was that strange?" [Chie]

I became concerned and asked Conrad who was to my right.

"….Well…" [Conrad]

However, only a vague reply came back.

Is it, or is it not?

“Black Knight-san, because all of them are your subordinates, you should behave more like a leader…”

As I was at a loss, Celes responded from the left.
So she says…

“No, if I were to act better than another I think it would leave a bad impression. Furthermore, since I am a suspicious looking person, I already give off the impression of a not-so-trustworthy individual.” [Chie]

The soldiers, “(So conscientious….).”

At this time, the voices of the soldiers’ hearts had synchronized together, but nobody would know.

“Commander….perhaps you have something else to say….” [Conrad]

Conrad said while troubled.

“Haa~….Well then….” [Chie]

I looked towards the soldiers again.
Standing next to the two Captains, I took a deep breath.

“……Thank you~.” [Chie]

—Zuten~tsu

Everyone fell to the ground.
After a few minutes, training started up.

“Commander! What are you doing!?”

Conrad got mad at me.

“Even if you tell me to act more leader-like, I don’t know how to.” [Chie]

I told him while pouting.
It’s not my fault~.

“Hmph! After saying ‘shut up stupid swordsman!?’ all the time. Hey! Why are Celes and Conrad called by their own names!?” [Adelbert]

Celes and Conrad retort to the words said by the stupid swordsman.

“ Doesn’t Stupid Swordsman fit?” [Conrad]

Conrad says as he looks at the stupid swordsman.

“Stupid Swordsman fits perfectly.” [Celes]

Celes also mercilessly spits out.
It seems that everyone is in favor of his nickname.
At the words of those two, the stupid swordsman drops to the ground on his hands and knees, hanging his head.
Serves you right.

“Don’t be depressed Adel. I’m the Muscle-Brother……” [Brandon]

The muscle-brother tried to encourage the stupid swordsman.

“At least you know the meaning of yours! I don’t even know what my nickname means!!” [Adolf]

The blue long-haired «ikemen» appealed to the two.
Oh, that’s right; this world doesn’t have a translation for ‘«ikemen»’ in its language.

“Hey, blue long-haired «ikemen»!” [Chie]

“Agh! I told you…” [Adolf]

“The word ‘«ikemen»’ in my country means ‘a good-looking or cool man.’” [Chie]

“….Huh, so it was only you guys who had such nicknames.” [Adolf]

“This traitor!” [Adelbert & Brandon]

I was back in a good mood so I explained his nickname while I moved us a little bit away from the stupid swordsman and muscle-brother. I said this while looking down on the two.
It enraged the muscle-brother and stupid swordsman.
The blue long-haired «ikemen» is simple.

“Black Knight-san, forget what I said just now.” [Adolf]

The long blue-haired «ikemen» acted as if nothing had ever happened and was talking to me in a rather good mood.

“Didn’t you hate me?” [Chie]

“Hahaha! What are you talking about?”

“…..” [All]

We were all shocked by the speed of his change in attitude.
Yesterday, he even said I was “repulsive”….

“Adolf….” [Conrad]

Conrad mutters the name of the blue long-haired «ikemen» while trailing off.

“Haa~, let’s get back on topic.”

Conrad sighs while steering the topic back on track.

“Please realize that you are this country’s greatest knight!” [Conrad]

“Not interested.” [Chie]

“Why you!” [Conrad]

Conrad looked troubled.
Even though I’m told that, if I’m not interested in it, I’m not interested; it can’t be helped.

“Ok, listen. What do you imagine when one says ‘greatest knight’?” [Chie]

I asked everyone to get an idea.

“Someone who is….. strong, kind and dignified as a knight?” [Adolf]

The blue long-haired «ikemen» says.
He’s all of a sudden friendly now….

“See, Conrad fits those words more so than I.” [Chie]

I said while pointing to Conrad.

“There is no such thing!” [Celes]

Celes clearly denies.

—kok kok

Amy also nods.

“….But for one to be dignified, does one also have to be arrogant? Can you

imagine His Majesty being arrogant?” [Chie]

Someone who listens to everyone.
I can not imagine it.
Rather, he gave off the image of someone who spoke to the people freely.

“….(Indeed!)…” [All]

Although it’s not said, the four people probably reached the same opinion.

“Compared to that, dignity with arrogance would be the same type as the stupid swordsman.” [Chie]

“Ah~….” [All]

“What! Even Brandon!” [Adelbert]

Muscle-brother also seemed to share the same opinion.
Stupid swordsman is crying.

“….However, Commander.” [Conrad]

Conrad frowns and says.
I imagined myself with the arrogance similar to that of the stupid swordsman.
It wasn’t very pleasant.

“Let’s do this. If there is a critical moment, I will switch over to ‘work mode’.” [Chie]

“….Haa~. I understand.” [Conrad]

Conrad reluctantly agreed.
A wry smile presented itself on the faces of everyone present except for the stupid swordsman and muscle-brother.

“(Truly, it will be our people who will be troubled).” [Conrad]

“More than that, is it always independent training?” [Chie]

I asked Conrad while we stood and monitored the training.

“Yes, it has always been this way.” [Celes]

Celes says.
While inquiring, I looked at the soldiers who are training once more.

Each person is training by their own thoughts and commitment.
Speaking clearly, this method is ineffective.
Because of the combat knowledge that was given to me about this world, I can observe and understand their methods very well.
The number of people who would become strong using this training method would be very few.

"….Alright." [Chie]

I have decided.

"This training method needs to change." [Chie]

"What!?" [All]

Conrad responds to the words I said with a quizzical face.
I'll just ignore him.

—Pan Pan!

I clap my hands together and the soldiers turned their attention to me.

"Attention! Training is to stop at once!" [Chie]

I said in a loud enough voice that the whole training ground could hear.
My voice traveled pretty well across the training ground.
Making sure everyone is paying attention, I spoke.

"I'll be blunt! Your training methods are not very effective at all." [Chie]

Everyone is dead silent.
Then, voices of criticism were raised.

"You! What are…" [Adolf]

"Shut up!" [Chie]

Blue long haired «ikemen» tried to protest, so I silenced him.
The soldiers who were also making noise all fell silent.

"For example….Archer-kun over there!"

"Uh, me?" [Archer-kun]

I called out to a young male archer who had short brown hair with gentle and

docile looks.
His eyes were brown and he stood at a height of 170 «kaumeito» (cm).
Brown padded armor on top of light brown skin with black knee high boots.
He looked nervous, seeing as how he had become rather rigid.

As for where Archer-kun stood, there were targets a few dozen meito (meters) away from him.
I walked over to where he was standing.

“Hey, try pulling the bow and arrow.” [Chie]

“? Yes….” [Archer-kun]

Archer-kun gave a puzzled face as he drew the bow and arrow.

“Stop there.” [Chie]

“Yes.” [Archer-kun]

I approached him and adjusted his body by dropping his shoulder a little and raising his arm a bit.
The surrounding soldiers looked on curiously.

“Alright, now aim at the center of that target.” [Chie]

“Hah!? No, that’s impossible!” [Archer-kun]

Archer-kun displayed an expression that said it wasn’t possible.

“It’s impossible for that guy!” [Archer](EDN: Another archer, if you don’t get the memo)
{Should we do Archer A, Archer B, etc like in last chapter?(Leo)}

Taunts came flying from behind.
Several people had gathered around with nasty expressions as they pointed out at Archer-kun, grinning and laughing.

“That person has never hit the target until now.” [Archer]

One of the rude archers said.

“Oh yeah, to enlist some like him, with his talent in the bow, the army must have been desperate!” [Archer]

—-Gahahahaha!

The other soldiers rudely started to laugh at what the other soldiers said.
Listening to the other soldiers talk down about him, Archer-kun appeared frustrated with clenched teeth, lacking the courage to retort them.
I am amazed by his ability to tolerate their abuse.
While the whole army was looking down on him, his problem with the bow was solved by me.

“After all….” [Archer-kun]

“To believe a thing impossible is to make it so.” [Chie]

“….huh?” [Archer-kun]

I interrupted his words of resignation.
However, the soldiers throw taunts after my words.

“What stories you have heard!” [Archer]

“It’s impossible for him…” [Archer]

“Shut up, worm.”

I said in a very low and deep voice that interrupts their taunts.
I thought about the voice changing yesterday, but didn’t think I could put out this kind of voice.
Bloodthirst seemed to come out with it, so of course, all the men around had pale faces.
I spoke to Archer-kun who has the same pale face as those around us.

“It’s okay, concentrate and aim while remembering your posture a moment ago. It will absolutely hit.” [Chie]

He looks at me for a moment.

“Do not worry about what those around you say. You can do anything that you set your mind to.” [Chie]

“….” [Archer-kun]

Upon listening to my words, Archer-kun nodded and tightened his face.
Once again, he drew the bow, looking straight at the target.
He adjusts into the corrected posture.
The surrounding soldiers looked on.

The bow made a ‘dou’ sound as it was being pulled back.
He aimed, then released.
The arrow, flying in a straight line,……hits the middle of the target.

“……..lies.” [Archer-kun]

He leaked out a small voice as he wore an incredible expression.

—ton ton

I tapped his shoulder.

“Hey, it hit.” [Chie]

I tell him.

“It….Yes!” [Archer-kun]

To my words, Archer-kun replied happily.

“H-How!?” [Archer]

The offensive archer raised his voice.

“Why? How do you not know?” [Chie]

I said to the offensive Archer.

“Look, the shoulder was raised and the hand was lowered, which resulted in too much power. If those are fixed then isn’t it natural that the arrow would fly straight?” [Chie]

“…..” [Archer]

The offensive archers give a look of discomfort.

“Though some people may hit the target, there are others who may not. By doing independent practice, which is a practice only the individual does, the people who are doing something incorrectly won’t understand what they are doing is wrong and will, therefore, be unable to fix it.” [Chie]

Upon saying so, everyone seemed to catch my drift.

“Identifying whether someone is doing something incorrectly, while they practice, is also good training. You understand why you have to do this, right? Especially being a soldier of the Empire like yourself? When it is your job to

protect the other people of this country, you'll encounter many critical situations, and with such disjointed teamwork, it becomes even more dangerous. Training yourself more efficiently is a matter of life or death."[Chie]

I appealed to them.

"Soldiers have a very serious responsibility. If there is no clear and definite cooperation, then the circumstances of the country will become dangerous! Which is the present situation!" [Chie]

Everyone seemed taken aback.
The people of this country already know what the Empire's current situation is.

"And that's why the military isn't effective as it should be. The training is ineffective from the start! So, training methods need to undergo a dramatic change!" [Chie]

First, I called out to the soldiers with weapons.

"Knight Corps, Swordsmen Corps, Spear Corps, and Fighter Corps, practice swings 1000 times! Start from the basics!"

"—-Yes!" [Soldiers]

The soldiers vigorously reply, beginning to swing their weapons while spacing themselves out between each other.
Their faces appeared earnest and they gave off a feeling of motivation.

"Archers form pairs and work together to point out the flaws in your forms!" [Chie]

"—-Yes!" [Archers]

Similarly, the archers respond vigorously.

"Lastly, Mage Corps! Most of your problems are yourselves! From a single look, I can see that all you do is just practice magic! Certainly, mind and spirit are indispensable in magic and one may think physical prowess is unnecessary. But, as one would say in my country, 'To strengthen one's mind, one must first strengthen the body'. In other words, by strengthening your bodies, your minds and spirits will also be strengthened! Not only will you train your magic but also your bodies! Start by stretching your muscles, then start running laps!" [Chie]

“—-Eh~!” [Mages]

The Mage Corps raised voices of reluctance and loathing.

—Buchi-tsu!

“Get moving, quickly begin or ——!” [Chie]

“—-Y-Yes!” [Mages]

The mages screamed in fear as they cut off my warning and began to stretch. Although some of the soldiers were not convinced, everyone seemed to exude a lot of motivation.
Alright! I’ll do my best in building this army!

*********(Conrad POV)**********

The Captains and I watched in astonishment as we observed the soldiers reacting to the instructions of the Commander.

“That Black Knight dude~…” [Adolf]

The first voice that leaked out was Adolf.
This guy, just from hearing the meaning of the nickname given to him, had a sudden change in his attitude.
He is a self-interested fellow.

“Hoh~ It seems only Adel has yet to admit it?” [Brandon]

Brandon admitted to recognizing the Commander and said as such to Adelbert.

“…..” [Adelbert]

Adelbert pouts with a grimace while glaring at the Commander who is running behind the Mage Corps members.
This guy, is he a kid?
Just how exactly did he become Swordsman Captain….

“Adelbert, you understand already don’t you?” [Adolf]

Adolf called out to Adelbert.

“We can’t even compare to that Black Knight. His Majesty and Conrad made the right choice. It is our loss.” [Adolf]

“You acknowledge the ‘Black Knight’ because of the nickname given to you, but the ‘Black Knight’ did not grant such a good nickname to me.” [Adelbert]

Adelbert yelled to refute Adolf.
Certainly, most of the things he said were true.
Though, I didn’t want to admit it.
Adolf said with a wry smile.

“See, the ‘Black Knight’ was meant to be born with a sword in hand. I absolutely cannot compete against that innate talent.” [Adolf]

Adolf continued.

“After listening to the ‘Black Knight’s’ reasons as to why we got into that fight, I felt regret. I doubted Conrad as a Knight like a fool. Well, the joke is annoying but…” [Adolf]

Adolf wore a wry smile.

“I was wrong Conrad in insulting the Black Knight whom you had acknowledged.” [Adolf]

“….Only this time will I forgive you.” [Conrad]

Adolf apologized and I forgave him.
We had come to an understanding.

“…..Still, I don’t accept this.” [Adelbert]

“Adel, you….” [Celes]

Celestia raised her voice in amazement.
We were all in the same situation.
What childish things are you saying?
This guy has some strangely high pride….

“Not yet! Not until the kidnapping case that we talked about yesterday is resolved!” [Adelbert]

Listening to his words, we were surprised.
To think this guy would say such a thing, I never would have thought it.

“…I will apologize to the Commander when everything is taken care of.”

[Adelbert]

“Understood.” [Conrad]

I reply to a face that was much smaller than expected.
It was quite an entertaining face and I laughed a little bit.

“Hey——–Shii! You guys don’t sit down–a–Hey!!” [Chie]

The Commander’s voice was heard from far away and we turn to look at the sight.
Looking over there, Mage Corps members were all sprawled out on the ground desperately trying to catch their breath while the figure of the yelling Commander stood over them.

“Hahaha! The Black Knight sure is fired up!” [Brandon]

“Demon….” [Adelbert]

Brandon laughed as he watched them while Adelbert gave off a discomforting look.

“Amy, why are you stretching?” [Celes]

Looking in the direction where Celestia’s voice had come from, Amy was nearby and working hard at stretching her muscles.

“I….also….run.” [Amy]

After saying so, she went running after the Commander.

“Amy? Is she gonna be okay?” [Adolf]

Adolf asked out of concern.

“Ah, me too!” [Celestia]

Celestia quickly stretches before chasing after Amy.
She seemed more like the Commander.

“Even Celestia….” [Adelbert]

Adelbert said while sounding depressed.
What are you, an abandoned puppy?

“Well, I’ll be training with my men.” [Adolf]

Adolf said and walked over to the archers.

“I also want to practice my swings. What about you?” [Adelbert]

“I’ll mix it up.” [Conrad]

“…..No choice. I’ll mix it up too.” [Brandon]

“Shall we?” [Adelbert]

Smiling wryly at the words of Adelbert, we headed towards the soldiers.
I think to myself as I walked.
The army had been disjointed, but with the help of that person we may become united.
The Commander who can do that is just that great, even if the person in question doesn’t know it yet.
But, that is why everyone is attracted to that person.
That person is the greatest knight in this country…no, the whole world.
Although it hasn’t been three days since we met, I want to work next to that person, now and in the future.
Yes, that is my strongest desire.

Chapter 11

Xant: Sorry about the delay, this was done almost a week ago but I got caught up in a lot of stuff.

Let's see here, for one, we recruited.

Katshu is now one of our proofers, awesome.
Gamings5 is a new translator on the team who is working on a thing that we won't discuss till later.

Unrelated, but Blastaf is translating Astarte into French, so if you're a baguette eater, head over to his French version.

We had expected Sneak to be done his secret new thing, but real life things happened in his family so it's delayed and I ain't gonna budge nor harass.

Effectively consider ID dropped, I spoke to Senna recently and she's swamped with working on her portfolio and a couple other things that have her full attention IRL. I am sorry about that, but School, Work, and Real Life are all priorities over this stuff. It may be picked up later when her shit gets sorted out, but expect nothing.

In other news, we are still looking for another editor. We've had a bunch of people submit proofreading tests which is darn awesome, but since we are sitting at 4 proofers now, I need another editor for all these series we have. Badly. Srs, we have 3 running and 2 in the works. I can only do so much, and I don't want to burn Draco out.

Chapter 11 – Mastermind Contact & Statement

Training Grounds

"Mage Corps! Put more spirit into it!" [Chie]

It's been two weeks now since coming to this world.
These past two weeks have been terribly busy.

Things like the kidnapping investigation, bodyguard missions for the princess, and military training. I now oversee all of these things.
I also oversee all the training methods, though there was some reluctance from the stupid swordsman.

“Got it? I still don’t recognize you! Until then I will oversee the Swordsmen training!” [Adelbert]

And, like a child, he drove me away.
It goes without saying that the stupid swordsman would look quite foolish if anyone looked at him right now.
Though I heard it from Conrad, is this guy really 23-years old?
In the end, the stupid swordsman was booed by everyone in the Swordsmen Corps and he was forced to accept the training change.
And now putting my attention into training the Mage Corps…..

—Ze~e, Ze~e, Ze~e

Shortness of breath at 50 meito (meters).
They start to become unsteady at 100 meito.
Somehow, they all managed to run 500 meito, but fall to the ground afterwards.

“…..” [Amy & Chie]

Amy and I were so amazed that we didn’t say anything.

I spoke with Amy next to me, who is calm and breathing normally unlike the other mages.

“Amy, you seem to be fine.” [Chie]

“Yes….I….trained….a lot….with….Celes.” [Amy]

“I see.” [Chie]

Amy and Celes are certainly on good terms.
I have also witnessed them training together often.
For Celes, the Captain of the Spearmen, physical strength was required.
If Amy trained together with someone like her, then it was inevitable she would become strong.

“As expected of the Captain.” [Chie]

I gave praise and Amy laughed joyfully.
Looking at such a smile was really soothing~.

Chie's Bedroom & Workroom

"Commander, I have brought the documents." [Conrad]

"Thank you." [Chie]

The morning training ends with field exercises, and at that time I retreated to my room and began filing papers, including the one Conrad had just brought me.
Because I could be called by His Majesty at any moment, I kept my armor equipped, but the helmet was currently sitting on the corner of the desk.
Taking a moment to change into plain clothes might be good, but working is more important.
I also think that wearing the armor is more comfortable.
As of 10 days ago, Conrad finished the registration papers, and became the Knight Vice-Commander, and did my secretary work.
Filing all of the documents, Conrad, Alice, and I spent our time in this room.
It had become our daily routine.

"Black Knight-sama, Brother. Why not take a small break?" [Alice]

Alice said as she brought out a tray of coffee cups, placing one on my workdesk, followed by one on Conrad's.
Conrad was actually using the table and chair I used for breakfast and dinner rather than an actual work desk.
This living area was equipped with a small kitchen and had a toilet and dressing area next door, so there's no need to go out.
It's perfect.

"That's fine. Let's take a 10-minute break, Commander." [Conrad]

"Understood. Hmmmm~~" [Chie]

Acknowledging the words of Conrad, I stretched.
Well, I never would have thought paperwork would be so tiring.
When in school, I wouldn't get tired listening to the teacher and taking notes.
Sitting in the chair, silently looking over the documents left to sign, I think I took paperwork too lightly.

Recalling that common anime and manga scene where the main character runs to escape from paperwork…I now understand why.
The papers were simple to complete, so there's nothing really difficult about it.
However, the mountain of documents made my eyes hurt.
Just looking at the amount that I needed to put my seal on gave me anxiety.
At such a time, Alice brought us coffee.

"Fuu~~" [Conrad & Chie]

Conrad and I relaxed.
Alice's coffee was seriously delicious.
It's pitch black, yet tastes so delicious.
During the short break, Conrad and I drink the coffee Alice made us.
This space only has 3 people, but I like it.
Oh~ The Peace~
Filling out and stamping the documents resumed….after a 30 minute break.

—Con Con!

"Hmm?" [Chie]

A knock made me stop.

"Shall I get that, Black Knight-sama?" [Alice]

"Yes." [Chie]

I put on my helmet.
Alice opened the door and checks.

"!?…Praetor Ackroyd. May I help you?" [Alice]

"!" [Conrad & Chie]

Praetor Brattle Ackroyd!
Conrad and I locked eyes through my helmet.

"I didn't come here to talk to a mere maid!" [Ackroyd]

A fat man's voice was heard.
Really, it was just like the dialogue of a foolish noble.
While I was thinking about the various things I would like to do to the Praetor, Alice looks towards me.

She seemed to want to know if he should be let in.
I permitted it with a nod and she lead the Praetor into the room.
A short, fat man who looked to be about 50 with a shaved head and a bad face barged into the room, wearing expensive looking clothes.
The man gave off a bad impression.
I stand up from the chair and Conrad stood behind me, to my right.

"Praetor Ackroyd, do you have business with me?" [Chie]

While being wary, I entered "work mode".

"Hmph! Recently some unexpected things had been done!" [Ackroyd]

"Unexpected things?" [Chie]

I asked in return while studying him.

"Don't play dumb! Selfishly using the city guards to replace the soldiers that were assigned to the villages and towns without permission from the Parliament or myself is beyond your jurisdiction!!" [Ackroyd]

Praetor Ackroyd cried out loud while displaying a distorted, ugly face.
Huh? What was this old man saying?
At first, I was too amazed at the silly remarks of the Praetor to say anything.
Looking at Conrad and Alice, they both wear an amazed face as well.
Well, I'm actually smiling faintly.
As he said those words, the feelings of anger I had while looking at this guy just faded away.
Having no means to compete with Praetor Ackroyd meant that the Imperial Family was effectively a victim. Until now, that is.
Didn't this old man ever notice that the situation had changed?

"You think I am your subordinate or something?" [Chie]

I lash out.

"And for that matter, why must I seek permission from the Parliament in order to take military action?" [Chie]

"Such a thing is natural! Since ancient times the 'Word of Law' was…." [Ackroyd]

“It seems you were not informed, Praetor Ackroyd.” [Chie]

“What?” [Ackroyd]

His face distorted with my words.

“That may have been the case previously, but the situation has changed now that I’m here.” [Chie]

“What did you say!?” [Ackroyd]

—Ban~tsu!

Praetor Ackroyd slammed his hands on my desk as he shouted.
Good grief, this man still doesn’t understand his position.
This guy, how did he become a member of Parliament?

“Did you forget the position that was given to me?” [Chie]

“Duke? Such a thing holds no power in the Parliament!” [Ackroyd]

Praetor Ackroyd continues into a tantrum.
Hoh~ It can be seen simply by looking you know?
This Praetor only sees the status that was bestowed upon him. A foolish nobleman.
This guy, he has forgotten the most important part.

“Haa~, to be this much of a fool.” [Chie]

I say while I sigh.

“You wretch! To say such a thing towards me!” [Ackroyd]

Praetor Ackroyd screams ungracefully.
I speak while looking down on him through the helmet.

“It’s as I said Praetor. You have forgotten the most important part.” [Chie]

“Ah, what the….” [Ackroyd]

The Praetor is confused by the sudden change in atmosphere.
I continued while ignoring him.

“I am not just the Knight Commander, I am the exclusive knight to the Imperial Family, among many other things….” [Chie]

“!” [Ackroyd]

Praetor Ackroyd widened his eyes.

“I only take orders from the Imperial Family. Do you not understand the color of this cloak? I have more authority than your Parliament.” [Chie]

At first, I didn’t understand why such a thing was bestowed to me, but now I get it.
His Majesty was searching.
He was searching for someone capable of changing the current state of the Empire.
Well, even though I don’t know a lot about this position, I think I would like to change the current situation of this country and I believe most of the people of this country are of the same mind.
To make that possible, this position was given to me.
To make that happen, there was one thing I need to do.
To change the essential qualities of His Majesty and the people of this country.
To that end, we must first solve this case.
I cannot afford to lose to this old man.

“Praetor Ackroyd, the replacement of the guards was to strengthen the security of the Empire. Why is it, that even with such frequent kidnappings, the patrols of the surrounding villages and towns were so lax? It is also unnecessary to have so many soldiers on patrol in the city.” [Chie]

Previously, looking at the current guard situation had caused me to be lightheaded.
Each village and town had about 30 guards, while larger towns had around 500.
In addition, most of these guards were young, and had a severe lack of training.
If a group of intermediate level monsters attacked, there would be little resistance.
Indeed, there have been some villages that had been wiped out in recent years.
Then there was the number of guards in the Capital. Roughly 5,000 soldiers were kept within the city walls.
Even if you spread that number city wide, I still thought it was too much.
Even half of that number was too much.
After talking with the Captains, we had selected new soldiers and assigned them

to each village and town.
It took about a whole week and had been quite exhausting.
The soldiers who were recalled to the Capital were retrained with the new methods.
However, the replacement and training of the soldiers were not the only reasons.

“Besides that, Praetor Ackroyd. The investigation team that was assigned to Conrad. Is this some kind of joke?” [Chie]

“Guu….” [Ackroyd]

Praetor Ackroyd lets out a moan at my words.

“This issue of people found missing within the Empire…In order to solve this case, a team was quickly formed to investigate the kidnappings. Yet merely 6 people had been assigned to Conrad to assist with his investigation. Can you explain to me why something like this happened? Praetor Ackroyd?” [Chie]

“It, that’s….” [Ackroyd]

Praetor Ackroyd fell into silence as he diverted his eyes.
This is what happens when you come in here and say dumb things without consideration.

“….Well, that is fine. As the Parliament had stated previously, there is not enough evidence to pass judgment upon anyone. Therefore, from now on, the army will move freely according to my command. Please tell the Parliament to focus more on politics.” [Chie]
“….” [Ackroyd]

Praetor Ackroyd clenched his teeth and glared at me.

I glanced at Alice, who understood the meaning of the gesture, and opened the door.

“It’s about time for you to leave. We still have work that needs to be done.” [Chie]

I told Praetor Ackroyd.

“……Just…” [Ackroyd]

“‘Don’t get carried away,’ is that how it is said?” [Chie]

“«Gulp»….” [Ackroyd]

Having interrupted the Praetor, his words fell short.
What a cliché villain.
With his twisted face, Praetor Ackroyd stormed out of the room.

—Bang

Alice closed the door and I set my helmet on the corner of the desk.

—Gishi-tsu

I sat back down on the chair.

“Whew~” [Alice, Conrad & Chie]

We all let out a grand sigh.

“I would have never thought we would come in contact with the other side.” [Conrad]

Conrad said.

“You’re right. Well, it just shows that the other side is troubled.” [Chie]

I say while leaning back.

“Right. The soldiers he had paid off are no longer present, which would cause quite a bit of distress.” [Conrad]

Conrad agreed with what I had said.
That was the other reason for replacing the soldiers in the villages and towns.
I thought there was a possibility of a traitor within the guards.
It was weird how barely anything had been reported, and yet the rumors around the capital had all contained very troubling information. So the Captains elected trustworthy subordinates to assign to each location and to communicate directly back to them the status of the area they had been assigned to.

Back in the Capital, all the guards who were brought back were subject to investigation.
As a result, some of the young guards readily confessed.
Upon coming into contact with certain individuals, they agreed to sums of gold

in exchange for turning a blind eye to the abductions.
From their confessions, we found that these people all had close connections with Praetor Ackroyd.
After the investigation was complete, the offending soldiers were sent to prison.
Accepting money for kidnapping children.
It was only natural that they received punishment.

"That's what he gets for tempting soldiers and having them turn a blind eye on illegal activities." [Chie]

"I agree." [Conrad & Alice]

Two people agreed with my words.

It appears it had greatly stunned the both of them.
There are consequences when bad things are done.

"Even with all that though~ The confinement location and auction venue still hasn't been found."

Thanks to the new soldiers, we had made good progress towards reducing the kidnappings, but we still haven't found the missing people or the auction sites yet.
Well it was only 5 days ago that we had completed the interrogation of the soldiers and the investigation began again in earnest.
I didn't expect to find leads quickly, but we have yet to even find any clues.

"Yes, the guards did not seem to know any of that information. Or rather, the opposing party knows very well that we are looking for this information, so it won't be readily handed out." [Conrad]

Conrad agreed with me.
Of course, if 'that' kind of information were easily found, it would be very bad for their operation.
While we were thinking,

—Con Con!

Someone came again.
After I once again donned my helmet, Alice opened the door to see who it was.

“Thank you very much.” [Alice]

To see Alice display a smile, it seems that it was not a fool, unlike last time.

—Bang

Alice shut the door and headed this way.
She carried an envelope in her right hand.

“Black Knight-sama, you have received a letter from Byron-san.” [Alice]

“From Byron?” [Chie]

I remove the helmet before receiving the envelope.
I use a letter opener from the drawer and remove the letter from the envelope.
I spread out the folded letter.
His writing is very poor!
It was like a snake that wriggled around and turned.
To be frank, it’s very hard to read.
I tried to read the letter nonetheless.

“To Sir Knight,
As promised I talked to the various people around the shops.
According to the bank owner, a man named Aaron has some information. Aaron likes to frequent «Wild Breath Tavern».
Aaron was an information broker of sorts, but not someone who gave out information readily.
That’s where drinking comes in.
Until now, many have tried to get information from this guy, but he challenges each person to a drinking game. The guys drink for the information. If you win, he tells you the information you want to know.
In other words, you have to challenge Aaron to a drinking game to get the information you need.
If this man were defeated it would be greatly appreciated.
To that end, we have great expectations of the Sir Knight.
Aaron has already accepted the challenge in order to get to know Sir Knight.
The match with Aaron, I believe Sir Knight can win!
‘Day-to-Day Clothing,’ Shopkeeper Byron.”

“….” [Chie]

I read the contents and remain silent.

“Commander, what’s wrong?” [Conrad]

Conrad called out to the silent me.
Alice also tilted her head and looked this way.
I hand the letter to Conrad and tell him to read it.
As for Conrad who looked at the letter…

“Uwa~ Looks like a kid drew a weird map.” [Conrad]

Conrad murmured.
He looked over the letter for awhile.
Upon finishing, he directed a face full of surprise and joy towards me.

“Commander!”

Conrad called out to me with an excited voice.

“With this, you could obtain powerful testimony! Certainly tomorrow you can take time off. Even right away tonight….eh, Commander?” [Conrad]

As Conrad was talking joyfully, he noticed my darkened face.

“Black Knight-sama? Is something the matter?” [Alice]

Alice asked anxiously.
So my complexion was that bad.

“What, you two….” [Chie]

“?” [Conrad & Alice]

The two people looked at me while puzzled.
They didn’t seem to have any clue why I was like this.
It was understandable.

“In this country, you are an adult at the age of 15, right?” [Chie]

“Yes, that is so?” [Alice]

Alice looked to me with a quizzical face.
Conrad was the same.

“In my country you are considered an adult at 20-years of age. You cannot

drink until you are at the age of 20…..In other words, I have never drunk alcohol before….” [Chie]

“Hah!?” [Conrad & Alice]

The two of them yelled out in surprise at my words.
Up until now, they have lived in a country where one becomes an adult at 15-years of age.
Conrad had also drunk alcohol since the age of 15.
The Holy Kingdom and surrounding countries were all the same.

“What should I do……” [Chie]

I was greatly troubled and embarrassed.
For the first time since coming to this world, I hit a wall.

Chapter 12

Xant: Yeah, uh, forgot we had this chapter done among all the things that happened recently. This screw-up is on me.

Chapter 12 – Drinking & Information

Night, En Route To «Wild Breath Tavern»

"….." [Chie]

"Commander, are you okay?" [Conrad]

While I was in anguish after reading the letter from Byron, it quickly became night.
For the first time in my life, I felt despair, something that I have never experienced in any of my crises before. Chie Saitou, with 17-years of experience, had finally felt despair for the first time.
And so, with the cooperation of the people around the shopping district, it was discovered that a man named Aaron held the information I needed. Because we couldn't think of any other way to get the information, Conrad and I arrived at the entrance to .
Since it's business related, Conrad is wearing his silver plate armor.
Apparently he was worried because I was distressed.

"….Yes, I have made my decision after coming this far. Although, there is no problem with the law here…..if I pass out drunk, I'm sorry." [Chie]

I apologized to Conrad in a low voice.
The only problems were with my liver and spirit. In the worst case scenario, I will pass out.
Okay, time to get fired up!

****

Conrad and I entered the tavern.

—Curran Curran

(ED: So these sfx are getting out of hand…)

A bell was rung when the door opened.

—Zawazawa

Having finished working for the day, many men were boisterous and happily drinking with friends and companions.
The tables and chairs were all taken and the only seating available was at the counter.
I noticed a man with wolf-like dark green hair watching us from the counter.
Was he Aaron, the information dealer?
We moved a step towards him.

“Hey! Aren’t you Conrad and Sir Knight!?” [???]

One customer raised his voice upon noticing us.
At this time all the men turned to look at who the customer was talking about.
And then….

“Hey~! Sir Knight, let’s have a drink together!” [???]

“Eh? Oh, no, we…” [Chie]

“Conrad! Come to drink with your boss?” [???]

“Hey guys! Good evening.” [Conrad]

We were surrounded by them and invited to drink.
I was troubled and at a complete loss.
Conrad greeted them as if he was familiar with them, but I couldn’t move.

“Hey, you guys! Conrad aside, Sir Knight came here on business! Don’t distract him!” [???]

As I was thinking about what to do, a familiar voice was heard inside the tavern.
Looking to the owner of the voice, I saw a giant man with shaggy red hair sitting at a table in the corner; it was Byron.
Three men were sitting in the other seats.

“Byron!” [Chie]

“Yo~ Boss. You came here quick.” [Byron]

Byron smiled and shook my hand.

“Hey old man! What about me!?” [Conrad]

Conrad, still surrounded by people, attempted to retort Bryon’s words.
Is he acting a bit childish, or was it my imagination?

“Gahahahaha! What Conrad, trying to look good in front of your boss?”

“It, It, It’s not what you think! I’m just escorting the Commander!” [Conrad]

Byron laughed heartily seeing Conrad acting childishly.
Conrad acted completely different from when we first met or even when speaking to the men and other Captains.
He looked like an ordinary boy you could find anywhere.
The fact that a 24-year old man like him could make such a funny face like this was splendid to see.
While watching him and thinking so, Conrad suddenly looked at me.
Realizing he had been seen, his face immediately turned red.

“Oh, no. Commander, that was….” [Conrad]

Conrad hurriedly said.
This was completely different from the calm and serious Conrad that I knew of.
In the past two weeks I had seen Conrad’s face become surprised, angry, or amazed, but this was a first.

“Pfft!” [Chie]

With such a funny sight, I couldn’t help but laugh voluntarily.

“Ah, Commander!” [Conrad]

Shouting with a small, angry, red face, I burst into laughter.
It was even funnier.

“Ahahahahaha!” [Chie]

I couldn’t endure and laughed so hard that I got a stomachache.
After that, Byron and the other customers who surrounded us burst into laughter and soon after the whole tavern erupted in fun laughter.

****

“I’m sorry Conrad. Your reaction was just too funny.” [Chie]

“…..It’s fine already.” [Conrad]

After laughing so hard, I felt terrible, so I bowed down at the waist.
The fact that I thought his childish side was cute is a secret.
While Conrad was back in a good mood, a man called out to me from behind.

“You sure look like a Black Knight.” [???]

Turning around, there stood the man with dark green hair from the counter.
He had a chiseled face and sharp green eyes.
He looked to be a man around 30 with a good physique, standing about 175-180 kaumeito (cm) tall.
He wore dark brown pants with a pale brown sleeveless shirt, and black honey boots with straps below.

“…..You’re the information broker?” [Chie]

“It’s Aaron.” [Aaron]

The man replied bluntly.
The feeling that I was being stared at hadn’t been my imagination.
I answered and put out my hand to shake his, but it was doubtful that the gesture would be shared.

“Nice to meet you Aaron-dono, I am Black Knight.” [Chie]

I spoke to him while maintaining “work mode”.

“Hmph! To think the Black Knight who was chosen by the legendary ‘unicorn’ was such a small guy.” [Aaron]

The information broker said resentfully after giving a snort.
Have I done something to be disliked by him?

“Why you! To the Commander you…” [Conrad]

“It’s okay Conrad!” [Chie]

“But!” [Conrad]

“Let me handle it.” [Chie]

I soothed Conrad who was angry over the rude remarks.
He looked at me quietly before reluctantly backing off.
I noticed recently that whenever someone spoke ill of me, Conrad and Alice usually went ballistic.
At first there was a lot of slander behind my back within the castle, but recently that wasn't the case.
Not sure if it was because of just those two, but they probably had something to do with it.
Well, things have been pretty good now.
I pulled myself back together and continued talking.

"Excuse me, please forgive my subordinate." [Chie]

"Having an big shot noble in front of my face right when I was in a good mood, this is the worst." [Aaron]

Is what he said. So that was the reason he was staring at me.
This person hated nobility.
There may have been something that happened in the past.

"…..Even if you say noble, I was born in a common household you know. I was just lucky enough to gain my status by helping out the Royal Family." [Chie]

There was no reason to hide this.
The only things I wanted to hide were my age, gender, and face.
Even if they investigated it, they wouldn't find anything useful.
The fact that I am a human from a different world wouldn't be found out with so easily.

"Ho~ If you want to prove that you're different from the other shit nobles then have a match with me, that is if you're up for it." [Aaron]

"Match?" [Chie]

I understood, but tilted my head and asked anyways.

"Challenge me in a drinking game. If you win, I'll tell you the information you came here looking for. If you lose, you pay for all the drinks." [Aaron]

It finally came.
Even though I have never drunk alcohol before, in order to advance to the next

step of solving this case I had to win here.
From his manner of speech, this man definitely knew something.
I cannot afford to withdraw.

"Understood, I challenge you." [Chie]

When I issued the challenge, loud cheers erupted around us.
The customers who had overheard us kicked up a fuss.
They moved in unison as they put one table in the center of the tavern and pulled up two chairs facing each other.
The shop master brought out two cups and two bottles of wine.
The information broker and I sat down in the chairs facing each other, the table between us.
I removed the lower jaw part of my helmet and entrusted it to Conrad.
The shop master unplugged the bottles and placed one next to each of the cups.

"All set." [Shop Master]

The shop master placed his right hand in the center of the table and then raised his voice.

"Begin!" [Shop Master]

He raised his hand to signal the start of the match.
I poured the red wine into the cup and quickly drank.
Bitter…..
That was the taste of my first alcoholic drink.

********Conrad's POV*********

The Commander had been playing the game for 10 minutes now.

"….." [Aaron & Chie]

They had been drinking in silence.
They were both on their 5th bottle of wine.
Usually it's bad for the body to drink at such a pace.
For the Commander, it was her first time drinking.
I was starting to worry.

"What's the matter? Why're your cheeks red?" [Aaron]

The information broker provoked the Commander.
As he said, the Commander had turned red.

“…..” [Chie]

Ignoring the words, the Commander continued to drink.
The redness had started to appear on the Commander’s skin around the 3rd cup.
The color of the skin was normal with the first two cups, but with the 3rd it had started to turn as red as the wine. Now, everything visible from the nose down is deep red.
Perhaps, she was not so strong against alcohol.
No, she was definitely weak to alcohol.

You could tell she was breathing heavily if you looked carefully at her shoulders.

“Ah, hey Conrad.” [Byron]

The old man who was standing off to the side spoke to me.

“I don’t think Sir Knight is too good with alcohol.” [Byron]

With a concerned look, the old man seemed to have also noticed the Commander’s state.
The surroundings were all noisy as they saw the Commander’s condition.

“Rather than not strong, it’s the first time drinking for the Commander.” [Conrad]

“Say what!?” [Byron]

Everyone in the tavern were surprised at my words.

The information broker also had a surprised face and stopped drinking.

“Until now, there was either never an opportunity to drink or he just didn’t want to.” [Conrad]

Based off of the story I heard this evening, I replied so that the age of the Commander would remain hidden.

“…..” [Chie]

All the while the Commander continued drinking.

She was acting strange.

“Commander?” [Conrad]

I called out to the Commander but there was no reaction.

“!? Commander!” [Conrad]

I rushed to the Commander’s side as she was lifting up another cup of wine.
I removed her gauntlet and touched her skin.
It was ridiculously hot.

“Hey! What’s wrong!?” [Conrad]

The old man also ran over.
The Commander stopped drinking and went limp, leaning against the chair.

“Hey now~ We gotta lay him down to rest. Master, we would like to make a place for this guy to rest, is that okay?” [Byron]

The old man looked at the state of the Commander then asked the shop master.
The Shop Master nodded and then moved to the back of the tavern to find some blankets.

“Hey Conrad! Help remove Sir Knight’s armor!” [Byron]

“!? Wait!” [Conrad]

Hearing the words of the old man, I stepped between him and the Commander.
The Commander wanted to hide her gender and appearance.
When we first met she said it was a complicated matter.
Although it hasn’t been directly said, generally one can understand.
The color of the hair, eyes, and skin, and the different facial features.
In order to hide this, the Commander always wore armor.
There probably were a variety of other reasons as well.
That’s why we can’t afford to remove the armor in front of this many people.

“You can’t take off the armor of the Commander! The real face of this man is a secret of the Empire.” [Conrad]

“…..Understood. If you say so, then we won’t take the armor off.” [Byron]

It seemed my words convinced the old man.
I was relieved.

“…..But why?” [Aaron]

“Eh?” [Conrad]

When I looked in the direction of the voice, I saw that the information broker was looking straight at the Commander.

“Why get so drunk? Why go so far, just for the information that I have!?” [Aaron]

The information broker bellowed at the Commander.

“You’re a noble right? Even being born a commoner like you said, wouldn’t it be impossible for anyone else to see you as a commoner!?” [Aaron]

Looking at the information broker, I felt like I was looking at someone who couldn’t believe what was in front of them.

“Are you stupid!? To go that far for the sake of people you don’t even know!!” [Aaron]

Everyone was silent while listening to the information broker.
He was shouting with a desperate voice.
Why he was so desperate, no one knew except for the information broker himself.
And then….

“….peo….ple.” [Chie]

“Commander?” [Conrad]

Commander, who was limp until a little while ago, corrected her posture and looked straight at the information broker.

“People….I want to help people. Is that…..so bad?” [Chie]

“Eh?” [Aaron]

To the words of the Commander, the information broker showed a look of surprise.
Looking at the information broker, the Commander continued.

“Certainly, what I’m doing…..from the view of others, I may look like a fool. …..But, being kidnapped…..treated like a slave…..to do such a thing. …..To discriminate against someone is wrong.” [Chie]

The Commander said while breathing heavily.

The tavern remained silent as she spoke.

“Certainly…..in this country, some nobility hold contempt over commoners…..and in turn the commoners hate the nobility. But…..only a small portion who do not see…..that I think are the fools.” [Chie]

“Tsu!” [Aaron]

The information broker who stared at the Commander widely opened his eyes.

“In order to awaken…..the eyes of such people…..haa~……we can no longer let these things happen within this country. The people kidnapped, not just them……the families and friends who grieve for those missing……to such people…..to prevent any more…..I must solve this case…..I took the responsibility of Knight Commander, so it’s my responsibility…re…spon…si…bil…” [Chie]

—Gon~tsu!

The Commander fell down onto the table.
Worriedly, I checked her condition.

“Suu~” [Chie]

Upon hearing her soft breathing, I became greatly relieved.
Since there was no movement even upon shaking and calling out to her, she must have been in a deep sleep.

“…..Responsibility…huh.” [Aaron]

The information broker murmured as I turned toward the voice.

“Unlike how this guy looks, he is quite the softy.” [Aaron]

Unlike the sour face a while ago, he now wore a wry smile.

“I give up! It’s my defeat. Never thought he would be a guy like this.” [Aaron]

—Tap tap

The information broker said while tapping the helmet of the Commander.
So that means she won!

“As promised, I’ll give you the information. Hey Master, give me something to write on!” [Aaron]

The information broker demanded from the shop master, who had come back before anyone had noticed.
The shop master left blankets for the Commander before nodding and moving to the back of the shop again.

“I’m telling you now, I only recognize this Knight. This information belongs to him.” [Aaron]

I nodded my head to his words.
It’s only proper, as the Commander was the one he surrendered to.

“Poor guy had to go through a lot~” [Byron]

The old man said while scratching his head.

“It’s not your fault old man. He decided to do this himself.” [Conrad]

While looking at the Commander, I was reminded of that evening.
At the time, I offered to go in her place, but instead she said…

“No, it’s useless unless I go. Byron was the one who recommended me so it would be impolite not to go.” [Chie]

Having said that, it was left to the Commander.
This was the result.

“You may be surprised by the things this person does, but it’s always the right thing. Well, sometimes it can be a pain but…” [Conrad]

“Gahahahahaha! I look forward to the good things that will come!” [Byron]

While the voice of the old man sounded through the tavern, the other customers began cleaning up.

Receiving the letter from the information broker, I shouldered up the Commander and headed back to the castle.

****

I did not think the day I would have to shoulder the Commander would come so soon.

“Vuu~” [Chie]

“Commander, you awake?” [Conrad]

“……Conrad?” [Chie]

The alcohol probably hasn’t worn off yet.

She didn’t seem very steady.

“…..Oh! The information!” [Chie]

The Commander recalled just now and raised her voice.

However….

—Gura~tsu

“Vuu~” [Chie]

The Commander who rose up suddenly, became dizzy and leaned back against me while letting out a small groan.

I smiled wryly and answered.

“It’s alright Commander. I have the information.” [Conrad]

“Eh?” [Chie]

Commander raised her voice and stared at me.

“After you blacked out, the information broker surrendered. ‘It’s my defeat,’ he said.” [Conrad]

“Seriously?” [Chie]

She said, sounding surprised as she raised her voice.

“Yes. However, it was presented as a letter that I was to give only to the Commander.” [Conrad]

I passed the letter to the Commander.

“What about the money?” [Chie]

“I paid it.” [Conrad]

“……I’ll return it later.” [Chie]

The Commander felt guilty and offered to pay me back.
But, I refused.

“It’s fine. Only the fee for the information was paid. The drinks were paid for by the information broker.” [Conrad]

Judging from the look of the Commander, she was surprised to hear this.
But, it’s only reasonable.
The Commander won the drinking game.
It’s only natural that the one who lost has to pay.
When I explained this, the Commander seemed happy.
Really, such an easy to understand atmosphere.
The Commander opened the letter to read it, but it was too dark out now to read.
The street lights only illuminated enough to know where to walk.
However, I underestimated the Commander.

“I see, so that’s it….” [Chie]

“What! You can read it!?” [Conrad]

I stumbled involuntarily.

What the hell!?

There’s no way you can read in the dark!

“Oh, I didn’t tell you. I can see perfectly fine in the dark with this helmet.” [Chie]

“……” [Conrad]

I couldn’t say anything back.

If it’s the Commander, it’s okay to think she can do anything.

“……So, what does it say?” [Conrad]

While still being amazed at the Commander, I listened to what was in the letter.

“It says…..” [Chie]

I finally let go of the Commander as I listened to the information.

Next Day, Chie's Bedroom & Workroom (Chie's POV)

"Vuu~…Head hurts~" [Chie]

Thanks to yesterday's drinking, I was lying in bed with a magnificent hangover, a cool towel over my forehead.

"See~ It's because you did something unreasonable…." [Alice]

Alice who has been nursing me said.
Indeed, this time it was my own fault.
But, I did not think I would be this weak to alcohol.
I thought I would be okay because this body was made by Amaterasu, but I was a fool to let my guard down.
At around 3 cups I had started to feel dizzy, but I kept drinking until Conrad stopped me at the end.
After that, I don't remember much.
I feel like I said something important to the information broker, but I don't remember what.
Now the situation was me lying in bed in a bad mood, unable to even think about doing anything.
But it wasn't all bad.
After Conrad received the information we needed, he had taken me back to the castle.
The information broker, Aaron had said….

"Especially from now on, I'll tell you information without the drink!"

Or so Conrad told me.
That made me really happy.
Rather than drinking again…..
I don't want to see alcohol for a while.

"Vuu~" [Chie]

In this state, I'll be bedridden for the entire day…..
The current time is 9:00.
It wasn't until 7 hours later that I would realize I could have just gotten cured by

Hayate.

Chapter 13

Xant: Apologies for the delay. Mass upload as an apology~
Also, wtf are with these sfx…

Chapter 13 – Riding and Thugs

“Come here, Hayate.” [Chie]

One week had quickly passed since I received the information from Aaron.
While I was taking a break, I went to the stables where Hayate was kept.

“Burururu~tsu!” [Hayate]

Hayate responded happily.
For the past three weeks, I had been working until the end of the evening, when I ate. Once in awhile, I would try to find time to spend with Hayate by riding around outside of the city.
Leading Hayate out from the stables, I prepared to leave through the city gates.

“Take care Black Knight-sama. Have a nice day.” [Alice]

“We’ll continue to keep watch. Go stretch your wings today.” [Conrad]

Alice and Conrad sent me off.
I nodded to their words and equipped Hayate with reins.

“Understood. Let’s go Hayate!” [Chie]

While riding Hayate, we went galloping out of the city.

Road

Hayate moved smoothly.
People, who were also traveling along the road, were passed in an instant.
People who were riding horses were also passed by in a similar manner.
As we were moving, I thought that this was how people traveling on the highway

with a motorcycle would probably feel.

A Lake

"Tsu~" [Chie]

Arriving at our destination, I dismounted from Hayate.
This was the place where I had first arrived in this world and the place where I had met Hayate.
The three weeks that I had been in this world have passed by quickly.
We had slowly been progressing towards the resolution of the kidnapping incident.
With the information obtained from Aaron, we found the headquarters of the Shadow Guild and had been spying on their men.
Considering the possibility of the Shadow Guild coming into contact with other people, it was decided that we would only observe them for now.
We could annihilate them, but now was not the time.
Though we would learn a lot, it still left a bitter taste in my mouth….
Well, for the time being!

"Hmm~, today I get to relax~" [Chie]

Still wearing the armor, I sat down on the spot.
To have a day like this once in awhile is good.
If you work hard, rest hard.
That was the teaching of the Saito family.
I put my head on my knees and relaxed next to Hayate.
Even though I was wearing armor, I wonder why it wasn't uncomfortable?

Well, anyways, it really is peaceful here.
The sounds of the birds singing and the wind blowing through the trees were pleasant to my ears. There was no sign of any monsters close by either.
It had been like this the first time I had come here as well.
Usually I could sense the presence of demons nearby, but that wasn't the case here.
Quiet was good, but I couldn't help but feel that it was a bit unnatural.
I wonder if that had something to do with why I had appeared in this place?

“Fuu~……eh?” [Chie]

—Gasagasa

While I was absorbed in thought, my attention was drawn to a sound coming from a thick bush.
This presence though, it wasn’t the same ominous feeling of a demon.
There were different feelings depending on whether it was a human or small animal.
How should I say it, this presence……..it was the same as Hayate!!

—Gasagasa

The sound came gradually closer.
Then, it came out of the bushes.

“….It’s a ‘unicorn’….” [Chie]

The whole body was that of a pure white ‘unicorn’.
A whole herd of ‘unicorns’ came out of the bushes.
They were all relaxed as they stood around the lake.
White, as far as the eye could see.
Among them, two were black.
Hayate didn’t seem to care, but I felt uncomfortable.
Come to think of it, it was in the knowledge given to me.
The Holy Land of the ‘unicorns’.
To put it simply, it was the place where the ‘unicorns’ gather.
The ‘unicorn’ doesn’t show itself to others in general. They only gather in pure places around the world.

One of which is here.
So that was the reason it was so peaceful here and I couldn’t sense any demons.
Maybe when I first came here, they were wary and didn’t come out, with the exception of Hayate.
At the start they were wary of me, but after seeing how Hayate favored me, they decided it was alright to come out.
Even so, the whiteness was so bright…..
With the sunlight of the day, it was even more blinding.

“You know, Hayate is better in black.” [Chie]

For a moment, I imagined my black armor with a white ‘unicorn’.
A black-and-white combo, it just seemed funny.
It gave off a tremendous feeling of discomfort. After all, I think black is best.

Road, Evening (on the way back)

I rode Hayate slowly back home.
Well~, today I got to see an amazing sight, in many ways.
The things I saw in that place today were things I won’t talk about to anyone.
If people were to find out about that place, poachers and thieves would ruin it.
It’s a place that I would want to visit again.
Spectacular view aside, it’s a place where I can go to relax in peace.

“Let’s go again sometime Hayate.” [Chie]

I said in a man’s voice.

“Bururururu!” [Hayate]

Hayate responded happily.
Alright! After this incident is over, we’ll go again!
But, before that….

“The guy hiding over there, will you come out now?” [Chie]

I spoke in a loud voice to the presence that had been releasing bloodthirst since awhile ago.
At the same time, Hayate stopped.

—Swoosh!

—Tosu~tsu!

Landing in front of us was the person who had been hiding in the trees.

“Assassin?” [Chie]

The person who had appeared was someone with dark gold hair and sharp blue eyes.
A long black scarf hung from his nose and was tied around the back of his head.
Wearing a long black coat over a black shirt, black leather pants, and black honey boots, he also had on black gloves that exposed his fingers.

He looked to be a young man about 170-175 kaumeito (cm) tall.
One could call him good looking, if not for his whole body being a conspicuous black mess.
At least, that's what I thought.

"….." [Assassin]

He remained silent, glaring at me.
I stepped down from Hayate, who warily stepped to the back.
I put a hand on my waist and observed the other party.
Visibly he was not armed, but a person like this probably had weapons hidden in his coat.
Probably a massive amount of knives or daggers.

"I need confirmation." [Assassin]

Assassin muttered that in a quiet voice.

"You are…..the Black Knight?" [Assassin]

Even though that was already understood, he needed to confirm my identity.
It was like a scene that could be often found in many web novels with the main character. The feeling in the air made one feel like a fight was about to break out. Realistically, I could think of no reason for such a thing to happen though.
I'll act playfully even though I am able to read the atmosphere.
Unlike that 'moron' Yusuke.

"And if I were to say yes?" [Chie]

To which he responded seriously.

"It's work……to kill." [Assassin]

At the same time that he had spoken, a dagger appeared in his right hand, and in the next moment he came running towards me.
I quickly pulled out Sakuya and intercepted the attack.

"Hoh~…." [Assassin]

"Hey, listen. Who is your employer?" [Chie]

I asked the assassin, who was impressed that I received his attack.

“Do you think that I would tell you?” [Assassin]

“I’ll make you!” [Chie]

His words were just as I had expected.
I went on the offensive and swung my sword.
The assassin deflected my attack with the dagger in his right hand.
Such smooth movement.
Unlike ogres, humans have the ability to think and move. No matter how much power I possess, I don’t have any actual combat experience.
I was able to beat the stupid swordsman because he had created an opening when he had let the blood flow to his head.
This time it was different though.
This was a real fight with our lives on the line!

The assassin created some distance between us and with his left hand, he produced three 30 kaumeito (cm) arrows out of dirt….and shot them towards me.
I deflected the dirt arrows with a single swing.
But the assassin who read the move quickly encroached upon my chest.
I avoided the attack by moving to the right and swung Sakuya in response.
The assassin leapt away, swiftly evading the swing.
Using his dexterity to change his position in air, he used the fall of his body to swing down with his dagger.
A loud sound rang out when Sakuya was raised to intercept the attack.
We glared at each other through my helmet as we each pressed into our attacks.

“Even though you’re wearing armor, you have some good movements.” [Assassin]

“Well thank you. You speak kindly despite being an assassin.” [Chie]

“It has been a long time since I met a target of your skill. I’m excited.” [Assassin]

“When you say so, it’s an honor!” [Chie]

I pushed back the assassin and swung Sakuya at a high speed.
The sound of clashing metal echoed and resonated within the area.
The hit-and-run fight continued for a while.

After we had a standoff of a few seconds I sheath Sakuya.

"? What are you doing?" [Assassin]

"I'm going to end this." [Chie]

While I said this, I lowered my stance by pulling my left leg out behind me.

I held the sheath with my left hand, while my right hand was on the blade's hilt.

"Phew~…." [Chie]

I exhaled deeply to concentrate.

"!?……" [Assassin]

The assassin instinctively sensed the danger.
He took a stance that appeared ready to accept any attack at any time.
What I was going to attempt now, was the infamous Iaijutsu.
(See here Battōjutsu or here Iaijutsu. Battojutsu is the craft of 'drawing sword from sheath' practice and older term for Iaijutsu which is the 'quickly drawing the sword from the sheath' for combat purpose. Chie uses the iai-goshi posture here, or the low crouching posture.)
By chance, I had come to love Japanese sword arts.
It was a move where one drew the sword from the sheath and could be used to cut the opponent or parry an attack.
It was one of the 'Bugei jūhappan' of Japan.
(The Bugei jūhappan or '18 kinds of martial arts' are the martial arts used by samurai's. Iaijutsu, being the sword-drawing art, is 1 of those 18.)
For me, it was the best sword technique to use.
I'm going to try doing it now.

In order to kill the assassin in front of me, I decided to get serious.
Even if it were not during this fight, I would probably have to kill another human in the near future.
Especially now that I am a part of the army.
It looks like that moment is now.
It would be a lie to say that I wasn't afraid.
But, I had already made my decision long ago.
For a while now, all that could be heard was the rustling of the trees.

“…..” [Chie & Assassin]

The standoff continued.
The Assassin and I moved at the same time.
Just as I was about to pull out Sakuya….

“!?” [Chie & Assassin]

We both felt a disturbance and immediately halted our attacks.
Passing by each other, we stepped back-to-back and observed the surroundings.
We felt that this was not the time to be fighting each other.

“!” [Chie & Assassin]

Perceiving a strong presence, the assassin threw a small dagger into the trees.

“Come out, annoying fly.” [Assassin]

Jumping out from where the dagger had been thrown, a familiar person appeared.

“You’re Gardo!” [Chie]

“Yo, Black Knight-san. Been a while.” [Gardo]

“……..As usual, overly familiar.” [Chie]

The assassin and I warily watched Gardo.
Earlier, this guy had been the ringleader who had sent the ogres after Conrad and the Imperial Family.
He had also appeared before me last time.

“No love, so ‘cold’~……..Well that’s fine, this time the target is you.” [Gardo]

—Snap!

Gardo laughed and snapped his fingers.
Then….

—Gasagasa

From the surroundings came figures with green skin and two horns on their heads.
They had sharp fangs that were clearly exposed.
A short height of 130 kaumeito (cm).

Rags were wrapped around their waists, and they carried a club in hand that was as long as they were tall.
The beginner class monster ‘Goblin’.
One usually wasn’t much of a big deal and would be dealt with by the newcomers of the military.
Certainly it was a lower ranked guild mission.
However, the number of Goblins right now was extraordinary.
The assassin and I were completely surrounded by a horde of Goblins.

“Really now, it would have been good if you had just killed each other, but I got noticed. I had been told to get rid of the assassin as well.” [Gardo]

I don’t know anything about him but….

“Looks like you’re being discarded.” [Chie]

I said to the assassin as we stood back-to-back.

“……Apparently so.” [Assassin]

The assassin nodded and readied his dagger.
I was in a bad situation, but he was in the same boat.

“If you gather up the small fish, it can be comparable to an advanced monster. Work hard and do your best!” [Gardo]

Gardo said before quickly disappearing.
Though we searched, it appeared he had really left.
All that remained was us and the horde of Goblins.

“…..Seems there’s no longer a reason for us to fight.” [Assassin]

“Yeah, you’re right. Now, we can go at them as a united front!” [Chie]

We checked each other’s intentions as we charged into the horde of Goblins at the same time.

Few Minutes Later

“Ora~a!” [Chie]

“Gugya~a~a~a!” [Goblin]

Killing the last Goblin, I looked around at the mountain of Goblin corpses lying around.
I returned Sakuya to its sheath, and Hayate, who had been fighting in the middle, came galloping over.
We went together towards where the assassin was.

“I’m tired. That was a disaster.” [Chie]

“……Totally.” [Assassin]

Even though half of his face was hidden, you could see the tired look in his eyes.

“Are you from the Shadow Guild?” [Chie]

I asked for confirmation.

“Well, I received the assassination mission this time, but the opponent was ridiculous.” [Assassin]

The assassin’s appearance showed a look of slight discomfort.
Perhaps he saw how differently I had fought with the Goblin opponents.
When the assassin had been my opponent, I couldn’t get serious as compared to when the opponent was a Goblin. He seemed surprised at the difference.

“What now, will you turn me in?” [Assassin]

I thought while looking at the dirty clothes of the assassin.
Certainly, those of the military have a duty to arrest people who were associated with the Shadow Guild or any criminal groups.
But, well~

“If not, what happens then?” [Chie]

I asked out of curiosity.
Speaking clearly, the Shadow Guild was no good.
This assassin though, felt different somehow.
I became curious about what the future would hold for him.

“Well. For failing the mission, I would definitely be punished. Probably killed.” [Assassin]

He said so impassively. He didn’t turn his back on me in the fight though. I have

a feeling~

……

To lose someone with his skills would be a waste.

“Hey, why not ‘join’ the army?” [Chie]

“……Hah!?” [Assassin]

Because my words were said out of context, the assassin raised his voice and opened his eyes wide.

“Are you stupid!? I came here to kill you! You normally wouldn’t recruit such a person, right!?” [Assassin]

“…What a pain. It’s fine, really. You’re the only one that has a problem with it.” [Chie]

The assassin scowled at my words.
Certainly, I thought that what I was saying was ridiculous myself.

“A while ago, we defeated the Goblins together. There is no reason to fight anymore! Sure it’s my duty to turn you in, but if I do that then it would be the death penalty for you. Until now, you’ve probably killed many people, but you had my back tonight and I can’t pay that back if I turned you in. Therefore, I invited you to ‘join’ the military!” [Chie]

Even if you say it was unreasonable, if you thought about it, you would realize that it was the truth!

“……You sure are different.” [Assassin]

“I’m quite normal though.” [Chie]

I retorted at the words of the assassin.
Silence fell upon us.
But not an uncomfortable silence.
After the silence.

“Pfft” [Assassin & Chie]

It was not certain how such an exchange had become funny but….

“Ahahahahahaha!” [Assassin & Chie]

We both laughed loudly until our stomachs hurt.

Few Days Later (Chie's Bedroom & Workroom)

—Ban~tsu!

—Bishu~tsu!

—Gashi~tsu!

"…….Watch what you're doing, Claude." [Chie]

The window suddenly blew open just as I had finished with the documents on my desk.
I called out to the source of the disturbance as I caught the documents that flew about the room.

—Bang!

"It's not my fault, Chie. It's the only place I can sneak in through!" [Claude]

Says the person who caused the disturbance as he threw a small knife to close the window….the anonymous assassin, Claude Oruguren.
Though now, neither of our faces were hidden.
A few days ago I had recruited him as a scout. He had become a very useful subordinate.
Well, strictly speaking it was still tentative.
Face, name, and age had been mutually shared since then.
Though I was surprised to find out we were the same age, he was even more surprised to find out that I was a woman.
Since then, we've had time to talk about various things and now we called each other by name.
Technically, we were superior and subordinate, but we talked to each other as friends.

"……Uh, Commander. He is?" [Conrad]

Surprised by the sudden appearance and our casual way of conversing, Conrad stopped processing the documents that he was working on.

"I'm sorry, Conrad. This is Claude Oruguren. The spy I talked about the other

day.” [Chie]

“Ah! So you are….” [Conrad]

Conrad, who looked at Claude, seemed to be impressed.
After picking up Claude, I had only talked about him to Conrad and Alice.
At first they were both quite worried, but after talking about how he had helped with the Goblin attack, they began to relax.
Claude and I both agreed that we should leave out the fact that he was originally an assassin from the Shadow Guild.
I don’t believe Claude was a threat to me anymore anyways.

“Claude, this is Conrad Aiden. Vice-Knight Commander, and my direct subordinate.” [Chie]

“Oh, ‘The Strongest Knight’ from what I have heard.” [Claude]

Claude seems to have heard about Conrad.
Of course, after all, Conrad was famous.

“Thanks, you may call me Conrad.” [Conrad]

“You’re welcome. Please call me Claude.” [Claude]

Conrad removed his right gauntlet and held out his hand.
Claude answered by removing his glove and accepting.
Good, it seems like these two will get along.

“That’s right! Chie! You told me to sneak around the ruins on the back side of town, but what’s up with that!? Do you know how disgusting those streets are!?” [Claude]

Nothing about him gave the impression of an assassin from the Shadow Guild.
That’s why I left it alone.

“Good job. Did you find out what I asked?” [Chie]

I asked as I started thinking.
After I recruited Claude as a spy, I had asked him to sneak into some places.
From Aaron’s information, there was a certain suspicious group of people who frequented the ruins near the back side of town.
At the time, the military didn’t have anybody suitable to move in covertly and

investigate them.
Using longswords and spears in an unfamiliar building can put you at a disadvantage. Bows and arrows were out of the question.
A mage can use magic to hide their presence, but if the enemy also has a mage, they would immediately be found out.
Noting the ability that Claude displayed during our fight, I asked him to investigate.
The result is….

“Slave auctions!? I had heard the rumors, but to actually see it leaves a bad feeling.” [Claude]

A big hit.

“Thank you, Claude. Just observe the situation for now.” [Conrad]

“My bad, but thank you.” [Chie]

We both thanked Claude.

“…..Now for some alcohol.” [Claude]

“……I don’t drink.” [Chie]

I said in a self-conscious manner to Claude.
I don’t drink alcohol.
I don’t even want to look at alcohol.

—Concon

After hearing the knock on the door, I put on my helmet and Claude hid in the back of the room.
He was good at hiding his presence.
When Conrad opened the door, Alice was standing there.
Relieved, I took off my helmet.

“I’m back.” [Alice]

“How was school? Tiring?” [Conrad]

“It was normal.” [Alice]

Alice smiled, having just came back from school.

Alice goes to school from mid-morning to 2:00pm.
In other words, she goes to school and works as a maid at the same time.
In Japan, people go to school to find a job. If you don't go to school, you just find a job.
Once again, I felt that she was amazing.
……In many ways.

"Claude, it's okay to come out." [Chie]

I called out to Claude who was still hidden in the back.
He came out with a relieved face.

"Alice, this is who I was talking about last time, Claude Oruguren." [Chie]

I introduced Claude.

"Oh! So you're Oruguren-san. Nice to meet you. I am the maid in service to Black Knight-sama, Alice Aiden. Pleased to meet you." [Alice]

Alice gave a polite greeting.

"Oh! I, um…..tsu!?" [Claude]

Claude was stiff.
He was staring at Alice's face.

"? Is there a problem?" [Alice]

"There, no! It's, ah, well….." [Claude]

He said hurriedly with a bright red face.
Hoh~ I see.

"…..He's gonna have a hard time….." [Conrad]

Conrad also seemed to have noticed.
Rather than worrying about his sister, he seemed to be more worried about Claude.
I understood the feeling.

"Claude fell in love with a ridiculous maid." [Conrad]

"Well, let's do what we can to support them." [Chie]

We watched Claude and Alice while smiling wryly.

My first encounter with Claude was the worst, but for the first time since coming to this world, I had made a friend.
I'll help him out the best I can.

Chapter 14

Xant: Here is numero two. Enjoy, you ravenous readers~

Chapter 14 – Conference & Before The Attack

Unlike in the middle of the capital, it was dark in the back alley of the slums even at noon.
This was where criminals and the Shadow Guild would gather for illegal trading.
No one would guess that this was in the same district as the shopping area.
That was why it was known as the back side of the Shopping District.
This was a place that even the residents of the slums didn't go near.
Using the rampart as a wall, a small and ruined mansion rose above the surroundings.
Apparently, the noble who used to manage the shopping center once lived there.

This nobleman had died a long time ago.
His son was not fortunate and lost the mansion.
Being of junior nobility, I was told he had returned to his hometown with only a few of his servants.
The mansion, with no one left to live in it, had become ruined and now gave off an atmosphere that scared others away.
I think it's easier to understand if I said that it looked like a mansion out of a horror film.
The soldiers of the Imperial Army waited in the shadows around the ruined mansion.
Several dozen mages had cast "hide presence" magic to ensure that their presence wouldn't be noticed.

"Knight Commander, the Archer Corps, Swordsmen Corps, Fighter Corps, and Mage Corps are in position." [Swordsman Soldier]

A man who belonged to the Swordsmen Corps reported in a low voice.

“Understood. Tell them to hold their positions and wait for the signal to attack.” [Chie]

“Yes sir!” [Swordsman Soldier]

After I instructed the soldier in a low voice, he acknowledged the order and left.
Soon we would attack the auction location.

A plan of attack had been created three days ago, using the results from Claude’s investigation of the auction venue.

War Room, 3 Days Ago

The Captains, including Conrad and myself, were all gathered in the War room. As for why no other vice-captains other than Conrad were present, it was because Conrad was allowed to wear a special cloak that was proof of his status as Captain, even though he was my subordinate.
This was because of his past achievements.
This was an urgent meeting between the Captains, who were ranked highest in the military.
We sat in chairs around a large, round table.

“To suddenly open an emergency meeting, does that mean it’s finally time to move out, Black Knight-san?” [Adolf]

Blue… Captain Addinsell asked with a serious look.
I nodded in response.

“That’s correct, Captain Addinsell.” [Chie]

For some reason, when I answered, everyone’s serious faces except for Conrad’s became surprised.

“What’s wrong?” [Chie]

“No…uh, it’s just, you didn’t use his nickname just now. So it just wasn’t the usual you know…” [Adelbert]

Captain Abercrombie said.

So that's what it was about.

"Now is a serious time, Captain Abercrombie. It is not the time to be playful." [Chie]

"Well, that is true…." [Adelbert]

Captain Abercrombie said in response, while looking puzzled.
Today was the first time I showed them my "work mode".
It wasn't unreasonable for them to be surprised, when one considered the difference between my current attitude and my usual playful attitude.

"Now, on to the main issue." [Chie]

Everyone's faces became serious again.

"I think everyone already knows, but recently two important pieces of information have come into our possession. First is the location of the Shadow Guild and second is information about a group of suspicious individuals entering the ruins at the back of the town. To start with, Conrad will report on the Shadow Guild." [Chie]

I directed my line of sight to Conrad.
Conrad nodded before starting the explanation.

"Currently, we have our subordinates keeping watch over the Shadow Guild. They were able to identify a suspicious looking individual through their observations. Upon investigation, it was found that an assassination request had been put in for the Commander…" [Conrad]

All eyes turned to focus on me.
I gave a worried look.

"It's not a problem. Conrad is usually nearby to assist me. Well, encountering Gardo on my previous day off was unexpected, but the Goblins were dealt with, so there's nothing to worry about." [Chie]

I said to everyone.
Claude shall remain a secret.
If I told them about Claude, I would be defeated by all the questions that they would ask.

“Continue, Conrad.” [Chie]

I ordered Conrad to continue.

“Understood. We found out that the man was an intermediary between Praetor Ackroyd and the Shadow Guild. Praetor Ackroyd hired this intermediary to put out a request to the Shadow Guild.” [Conrad]

This man happened to be a big catch.
During interrogation, he talked non-stop while acting all nervous and jumpy. Not only did he talk about the request for my assassination, but he also talked about the kidnapping requests, backed up with evidence of their activities.

“We offered to release this man on the condition that he would report any future requests made by Praetor Ackroyd to the Army immediately. In this case, the request was not made by this man, so it was determined that there would be no issues with releasing him. However, he was warned that if he did not honor the agreement there would be no such mercy next time.” [Conrad]

Everyone seemed satisfied with what Conrad said.
I remembered the pale face of the man during the investigation.
I had just watched as Conrad had turned into a demon as he interrogated the man.
I wonder if that was what they called bone-chilling fear?

“That concludes the report, Commander.” [Conrad]

“Oh. Thank you, Conrad.” [Chie]

I thanked Conrad, then turned my line of sight back towards the Captains.

“Next is the second piece of information, which involves the ruins at the back of the town. It was found out that the next auction will be held there in several days. I would like to immediately form a unit to launch an attack on this location.” [Chie]

“…I’m concerned. How did we obtain this information?” [Brandon]

Captain Adams asked.

Everyone other than Conrad was of the same opinion.

“Well, we just…” [Chie]

I tried to think of acceptable words to say.
Claude's presence shouldn't be revealed to anyone other than Conrad, Alice, and His Majesty.
That way, it would be easier for him to move.

"…..Haa~, it's not something we need to be concerned about." [Adolf]

I silently expressed relief.

"What matters is the positioning of all the corps. My bowmen will surround the buildings, cutting off any escape paths." [Adolf]

"My Fighters Corp will do something similar. Honestly, fighting within the buildings would be quite difficult for my men." [Brandon]

I nodded to the words of Captain Addinsell and Captain Adams.

"If that's how it is, then the Spear Corps should also wait outside." [Celes]

"Understood. Captain Arnold, I would like your Mage Corps to spread out among the other corps to help with defense and concealment. Move as you see fit." [Chie]

"Yes…Sir. They…can…cast…'hide…presence'…magic." [Amy]

Captain Avery and Captain Arnold also confirmed their positions.

"That leaves the assault to the Knight Corps and Captain Abercrombie's Swordsmen Corps. Is that alright?" [Chie]

"….I don't care." [Adelbert]

After a slight pause, Captain Abercrombie accepted.
I knew he didn't like me, so I ignored it.
I also didn't acknowledge him.

"I'll have command of the assault troops. Who will lead the external forces?" [Chie]

It wasn't like all the Captains could be involved in the attack.
At best it would be me and another person, but should it be the Bow, Spear, Fight, or Mage Corps Captain?
It was previously decided that Captain Abercrombie would lead the troops

guarding the castle grounds, so he would wait here.

“I’ll do it.” [Adolf]

Stated Captain Addinsell.

“I’ll give the orders. Archers excel at ranged attack. We can easily observe the situation and relay orders to the others.” [Adolf]

Everyone nodded to his words and afterwards the unit was created.
Since there was little time, we rushed to select the members of the unit, and procure and check the equipment.

The auction date quickly arrived.
It became completely dark as the soldiers concealed themselves in the surrounding buildings.
Filled with tension, my heartbeat increased immensely.
My mind was clouded with anxiety.
…
It was no good; my hands were trembling.
I grabbed my arm so the other soldiers wouldn’t see.
They would become uneasy if they saw it.
I stood up to leave and calm down.

“Commander, what’s wrong?” [Conrad]

When I went to leave, I heard Conrad’s voice.
I needed to say something to him.

“Just getting a little excited. I’m going to cool down.” [Chie]

I said quietly, so only he could hear.

“…Understood, be careful.” [Conrad]

It looks like he knows.
After all, he’s an adult. I’m reminded of it again.
I walked away to a more secluded area.

“Phew~” [Chie]

I let out a large sigh as I sat down against a wall.
Mentally preparing myself had been useless…

The tension caused my heart to beat faster, and I felt a discomfort in my chest.
Not only my hands, but my whole body had started to tremble.
How could I…
If I were to fail here.

As I began to think, I was filled with unease.
Even when given power equal to that of the Demon Lord, or all the knowledge of this world, I was still just a high school girl.
The knowledge given to me was of common sense, fighting, politics, history, and legends.
The knowledge came from the Elk god of this world, and was implanted into this body.
The knowledge was enormous, as much as all the information contained in a large library.
This was only possible because this body was made by Amaterasu.

Considering history, the knowledge of the next 4 years had not been entered.
Perhaps it was because the future where Yuusuke was summoned had yet to occur.
Amaterasu may have sent me back in time in order to gain combat experience.
Actually, she had explained that to me before I left.
However, when I thought about why I was sent to this world, perhaps I would make a future where, in 4 years, Yuusuke would need to be summoned.

"Hah~, that's ridiculous~" [Chie]

I let out a deep sigh and muttered in a low voice.
Don't think of such things right now.
It's heavy~….

I felt like weights had been attached to my whole body.
Since I came to this world, the only original knowledge I had were of Earth's anime, manga, and games.
A simple high school girl wouldn't have been accepted by His Majesty, and there would have been no reason to let me train the military.
There would have been no reason to give me the title of Duke, let alone

Commander.
Even being favored by the Royal Family…
None of it was done through my own strength.
The more I thought about it, the more negative I became.
My face under the helmet was probably making a pathetic expression right now.

"…You look discouraged, Black Knight-san." [???]

"!?…Claude?" [Chie]

I was surprised by the voice directed at me.

The voice came from a spot between a house and a wall.
A man was leaning against the wall with his arms folded.
As usual, a black scarf hid his nose and mouth.
Usually, the night and shadow would hide anyone there, but my helmet allowed me to see clearly.
I was surprised when I noticed Claude's profile.

"…You're pretty good at hiding~. Usually I'm good at picking up any signs." [Chie]

I was talking in my usual way, rather than how I talk in 'work mode'.
I really didn't notice him.
In my original world, I was already sensitive to my surroundings, but coming here had made me even more sensitive.

"Idiot, you were so defenseless." [Claude]

"Haha…" [Chie]

Hearing Claude's words, I laughed at myself.
I had no words to say in return.

"…What's up? This isn't like the usual you." [Claude]

"…Usual…me." [Chie]

So he said, but I didn't even know what the usual me was like.
A woman?
A Black Knight?

“The usual me…what is it?” [Chie]

“Huh?” [Claude]

“Just answer me…” [Chie]

Claude made a strange face when he heard my words.
I asked him for an answer.

“…Let’s see~” [Claude]

Claude looked like he was thinking.
I waited nervously.

“An unreasonable, suspicious, merciless, naive, and strange guy.” [Claude]

“……” [Chie]

I quietly grabbed a bunch of pebbles and threw them at Claude.
He quickly ducked to avoid them.
Although I hadn’t thrown the stones in earnest, I was secretly irritated that he had dodged them.

“Hey! What gives!?” [Claude]

Complaining, Claude stood up again.

“Too loud! And those are all bad things!” [Chie]

We ended up shouting at each other, though not too loudly.
There was no way someone wouldn’t get angry when talked about in such a way.

“What! Right when I thought you were all depressed you suddenly become all energetic again. Really you, even while not wearing your armor you have become strange!” [Claude]

“Huh? Strange…I am?” [Chie]

I involuntarily gave him a blank look.
Under my helmet, I probably looked like a pigeon that had been shot by a peashooter.

“What’s with that blank look?” [Claude]

“Oh, I mean…I was just wondering what you thought was strange.” [Chie]

I responded in surprise to the words that Claude spoke.

“Huh? What are you talking about?” [Claude]

Amazed, Claude continues.

“In the beginning, your voice was different depending on whether or not you were wearing the armor. These last few days, when I listened to you talk while changing voices, I thought something was strange. Just now I thought the same thing.” [Claude]

When he said that, I tried to recall my voice from the last few days.
Certainly, even without wearing the armor, I spoke with a man’s voice even though I’m a woman.
While outside the armor, I had only spoken to Conrad, Alice, and Claude, so I hadn’t even noticed.

“I didn’t notice at all…” [Chie]

“You didn’t even notice until now…” [Claude]

I nodded in response to Claude’s words.
Stunned, he looked down at me.

“I see… it changed…” [Chie]

I muttered to myself.
Strangely enough, the tension that had built up a while ago had eased somewhat.

“You alright?” [Claude]

Claude asked with a doubtful expression on his face.

“Ah~, actually, I was troubled just a little while ago. About what would happen if I failed here.” [Chie]

“……” [Claude]

Claude silently listened to me.

“Because this is my first mission, I became terrified thinking that I might fail here. The feeling grew as I thought about my position, and it made me

insecure. I wondered about His Majesty's intentions when he gave me this position." [Chie]

Those were the feeling that had been accumulating up until now.

"A man in his position, he must have some sort of aim." [Chie]

"You think so? Recommendations from the Captain and Vice-Captain alone is enough merit, or so I would think…" [Claude]

I agreed with Claude.

Perhaps I had been thinking about it too much; no matter how much I thought, I could not find an answer.
Until now, a person whom I could ask for advice had not existed.
Though Conrad had been more reliable than anyone else, because he maintained a superior to subordinate relationship it was difficult for me to consult him.
He gave off an atmosphere of a strong and stern individual who didn't express deep feelings.
I would have loved to talk with Alice, but because she worshipped me due to my position it was difficult to consult with her.
Compared to those two, it was much easier to talk with Claude.
After all, unlike with subordinates and key employees, one could freely speak to friends.
There was no one else in this world that I could talk to as a friend.
Once again, I thought that Claude was a valuable existence.

"Enough talking about difficult stuff." [Chie]

I said while standing up.
I had been gone long enough.
If I didn't return soon, it would be past time to lead the assault.

"Black Knight-san, I think it's okay to just do what you think is best." [Claude]

Claude said unexpectedly.
I turned to face Claude.

"As I think?" [Chie]

I asked, puzzled.

“There have been times when I was confused and didn’t know what to do. At those times, I think it is better to do what you feel is right rather than not doing anything at all.” [Claude]

He said while looking at me with serious eyes.
Certainly, it was as Claude said.

“Understood.” [Chie]

I couldn’t afford to worry at this late hour.
I would just have to do what I could.

“Claude, are you really an assassin? Such a thing wouldn’t be said by a normal assassin, don’t you think?” [Chie]

I said to Claude.
Even though we were friends, I didn’t know much about his background.

“Hmph, I have a number of reasons.” [Claude]

“I see.” [Chie]

Claude muttered grumpily while I gave a small laugh.

“And I’m not an ‘Assassin’ anymore, I’m a ‘Covert Investigator’ now.” [Claude]

“It’s still ‘temporary’ though.” [Chie]

I retorted to Claude’s proud words.
We put off the formal procedure so it was still ‘temporary’.

“Hmph, whatever.” [Claude]

Claude became grumpy again.

“Hahaha! After this is over, we’ll do the formal procedure. Wait for it until then.” [Chie]

I said to Claude while laughing.

“Hoh~, that so. I’m fine with this title though; I’m starting to like it.” [Claude]

Claude said with a sigh.

I had given him the title for fun, but he seemed to have grown attached to it.
I wasn't sure why I did such a thing, but I remembered that when I had told him the job title and description, he had responded happily.
That was the first time I saw the true Claude.
That's what I thought.

"Good. You better look sharp when that happens, since we'll be going in front of His Majesty together." [Chie]

"Stop that, I'm already nervous enough as it is." [Claude]

Claude said wearily as he put a hand on his chest.
It was understandable.

"Oh no! We'll also have to get something for Alice for her birthday!" [Chie]

"Seriously!?" [Claude]

He was wide-eyed and very attentive.
It seemed like he really wanted to know.

"Thank you~! As I thought, you'll need help to win her hand." [Chie]

"Calculating girl, you." [Claude]

Claude said happily, with a wry smile.

"Well, it's time to go." [Chie]

"Oh! I might not be able to help this time, but good luck." [Claude]

We shook hands and parted.
Claude…it was good to talk to a friend.
My trembling and tension had subsided.
Now I would just do what I could.
We would launch the attack soon.
I headed back to where the soldiers were waiting.

Chapter 15

Chapter 15 – Attack & The Unexpected

Front of Ruins

“On my command, advance according to the plan.” [Chie]

“Sir!” [Soldier]

One last confirmation before the attack.
After separating from Claude, I had returned to where the soldiers were waiting and finished preparations for the attack.
We were about to start the attack on the entrance.

“Phew~” [Chie]

I exhaled deeply to calm myself down.

“….Alright! Now!!” [Chie]

—-Hah!!

There was a loud confirmation of my command as we rushed towards the ruins.
The mages used the spell ‘light’ to brighten the area.
We rushed towards the entrance while still under the effects of ‘hide presence’ magic.

“What’s going on!?” [Guard]

There were two guards in front of the entrance to the ruins.
They reacted in confusion to the sudden brightness and our rapid charge.
However, I could feel someone else’s presence hidden within the darkness.
He left his hiding place and confronted me, attempting to block my progress.
I prepared to draw Sakuya in response.

“Gu~a~tsu!” [Hidden Guard]

An arrow suddenly pierced the man’s chest.

He fell backwards with the arrow stuck in his chest, which had apparently hit his heart.
I looked towards the direction that the arrow had come from.

"……" [Chie]

When I looked in that direction, I saw Captain Addinsell standing on top of a building far away.
I was impressed.
No matter how bright it was, there was still a considerable distance between us.
However, the arrow had hit the hidden guard's heart.
Well, as expected from someone who had obtained Captain rank!

"Hurry!" [Chie]

The Corp members nodded to my order and continued into the mansion.
Conrad and I split up, forming groups of ten, planning to use the wide corridors to reach the same location.
Our strategy was for my team to attack from the seating area while Conrad's team attacked from the presentation area.
It was basically a pincer attack.
The routes had all been examined by Claude.
It was definitely the correct decision to recruit him.
Using the knowledge obtained from his scouting, we managed to progress smoothly, without getting lost.
So, just as I had thought, he was a man of his word.

"……." [Chie]

Ahead of us, there were around five people, I think?
Some rough looking men in front of us blocked our route.
The destination was still further ahead.
The route might not be difficult, but that didn't mean that they would make it easy.
I drew Sakuya as I ran.
Unlike the time with Claude, I wouldn't have the luxury of not killing someone here.
The guards brandished their weapons and rushed towards us.

Without any wasted movement, I used Sakuya to block the guard's attack as it came towards me. I used the opening created and Sakuya tore through the guard's throat.

"……." [Chie]

Blood spurted from the guard's neck and sprayed over my armor.
The body fell to the floor, convulsed a few times before stopping, and became still.
On this day, I had killed someone for the first time.
However, I could not afford to stand around in shock.
When I looked around, I saw that the remaining guards had already been dealt with.

"Let's move!" [Chie]

"Sir!" [Soldiers]

They responded to my words, and we continued moving forward.
We ran to reach the people in the viewing area and finish this.

Conrad's POV

We parted ways with the Commander's group and made our way to the presentation area, using the information from Claude's scouting.
Some men attempted to hinder us along the way, but they were all dealt with.
Thanks to Claude's investigation, we were able to take a route that was large enough to comfortably swing a sword.
After learning of the sizes of the corridors, the Commander and I had decided to each take nine subordinates down them.
How fortunate to find someone with that kind of talent.
Initially, I had been anxious about his joining, but after observing him, I found his work to be quick and precise.

If it weren't for him, we wouldn't have reached this far so quickly.
As I had previously thought, it was fortunate that the Commander had appeared.
Oh, I had ran ahead of everyone due to my good mood.
My mouth had definitely broken out into a huge grin by now.

As I thought such things, we neared our goal.
Knowing the routes you needed to take made it much easier to advance.
Well done, Claude!
As it is, I'll support a relationship between him and Alice.
However, with Alice, there would be various high hurdles to overcome.
I'll tell him the things Alice likes to show him my gratitude.
As I thought about this in a corner of my mind, we arrived at our destination. I opened the door slightly and peeked inside.

"Everyone, thank you for your patience! We will now commence the auction!!"
[???]

When I peeked through a door, a voice echoed from the back of the room.
When I looked at the back of the presentation area, there were more guards like the ones we had met earlier.
However, they didn't appear to be any more skilled than the previous ones.
I didn't think that it would be a problem if that was all.
However, it bothered me that it was too easy.
There had been very little resistance on the way here.
When you were used to battle, you could get a feel for these things.
Was it just me, or did it seem like there were too few guards?
It was difficult to believe that the number of guards were just more concentrated toward the Commander's side.
It would be nice if everything went smoothly.

Chie's POV

On our way to our destination we were attacked by several more people, but we still moved on without any major problems.
Up until this point, all the guards we met were simply killed.
Growing up in modern Japan, I had known that people die all the time, but experiencing it first hand made my heart tremble.
Even though I thought I was prepared, I was still scared.
However, I was also relieved that I was scared of this.
As long as I remember this feeling, I am still me.
When I think of such things, I am able to move forward with a lighter heart.

We arrived at the destination.
The 2 men standing guard at the door were killed quickly.
The guards, who didn't even have time to alert anyone, were moved to the side and the door was quietly opened to peek inside.

"Everyone, thank you for your patience! We will now commence the auction!!" [???]

It seems we arrived just in time.
It was a relief that we had managed to make it this far.
However, even though Claude scouted the way for us, it seemed too easy.
There were only a few guards on the way which made it easy to get here, though I'm not saying they were weak in any way.
Were they concentrated more on Conrad's path?
No, there would be no reason.
Both paths arrive at the same place.
Whether it is the seating area or the presentation area, the paths are different but the location is the same.
If it's only that then their security is a joke.
It would be nice if there was nothing else.

"Commander, should we go in?" [Soldier]

While I was lost in thought, a man from the Knight Corps asked quietly.

"No, not yet." [Chie]

I answered in a similar voice.
We will wait for the right moment.
When I give the signal, Conrad will also rush out onto the presentation area.
Most likely, they have already arrived behind the door to the presentation area.
However, it's pointless to go out now.
We must wait for the right moment to get conclusive evidence.

"Now, for the first auction piece!" [???]

I held my breath.
It's okay, I'm not alone in this.
One of the men on the presentation stage placed a doll of wood in the center of the area and began to pour magic into it.

“Wait for my signal.” [Chie]

The 9 other soldiers nodded to my words.
A light enveloped the doll and it gradually turned into the figure of a woman.

“A young woman from Collas Village! Starting price, one gold!” [???]

—-Bann!

Following the words of the speaker, the doors were pushed open with full force.
The subordinates lowered their bodies to remain out of sight.
A beautiful and luxurious venue entered my view once inside, the opposite of the bleak hallway from a moment ago.

“What! Why are you here!?” [Ackroyd]

Praetor Ackroyd, a familiar face, and also the organizer of this whole scheme.
He raised his voice from the front row.
The surrounding started to become noisy, wondering what had happened.
I spoke while looking down on him.

“Why? Those should be my words Praetor Ackroyd.” [Chie]

“Gu~u~tsu!” [Ackroyd]

Ackroyd clammed up at my words.

“I came here based on key information from a certain person. Apparently it was the right decision.” [Chie]

I said while looking at the presentation stage.
Even though nothing was said, the situation spoke for itself.

“Now everyone, please remain where you are. Even though some of you are from another country, you undoubtedly know that slavery is a crime in this country.” [Chie]

The faces of the spectators who were thinking of fleeing began to pale.
That was probably my fault?

“I recommend that you give up and quietly surrender.” [Chie]

“Hmph! You fool, it was your mistake coming alone.” [Ackroyd]

—Bachi~tsu!

When Ackroyd snapped his finger, multiple guards came out from the back of the presentation area.
Only about 10 people?

“Fuhahahaha! Black Knight, are you too ‘feeble-minded’ to not understand the difference in numbers?” [Ackroyd]

Spontaneously spewing insults to your opponent, how absurd.
This person thinks he has the advantage. Well, he’s completely mistaken.

“Who ever said I came alone?” [Chie]

“…….Can’t be.” [Ackroyd]

Ackroyd seemed to have finally noticed his current situation.

“Come now, how many guards were stationed up to this point? No reasonable person would rush into a suspicious place alone.” [Chie]

Conrad, who was waiting behind the presentation area, drew his sword as he entered through the doors.
Now both entrances were blocked.

“This place is surrounded. Other military personnel are waiting just outside. For now, remain seated as you are.” [Chie]

The faces of the people within the venue turned pale blue as they realized escape was impossible.

“Capture!” [Chie]

To help Conrad capture the people in the presentation area, a ‘binding’ spell was cast, restricting their movement.
‘Bind’ is a magic seal that restricts an opponent’s movements.
I used an non-attribute magic that can be applied to everyone in an area.
That way, even if there is someone who can use magic in the group, there shouldn’t be a problem.

“It’s the end Praetor.” [Chie]

I said while looking at Praetor Ackroyd.

“Hmph! Fuhahahahahaha!” [Ackroyd]

However, Praetor Ackroyd burst into laughter.
I’m getting a bad feeling about this.

“…..What’s so funny?” [Chie]

I asked Praetor Ackroyd while becoming nervous.
The Praetor stopped laughing and looked at me.

“Apparently I have been taken lightly. I have already prepared for something like this to happen.” [Ackroyd]

As he was talking, he took a red magic charm out of his chest pocket.
What is that?
It gives off an ominous feeling when you focus on it.
Almost like something is sealed within it.

“Heh! This is something that was given to me by the Demons! Black Knight, once you are out of the way, the assassination of the Imperial Family will succeed and the Parliament will gain full authority over this country!!” [Ackroyd]

“!?…….Heh, the Ogre attack was also your handiwork.” [Chie]

What a confession.
Is it because he feels trapped or is it desperation?

“That’s right! A signed contract with the Demons. In exchange, they will not harm this country. This is a part of that!” [Ackroyd]

He spread his arms wide open, motioning towards the entire venue.
Indeed, it’s quite the elaborate plan made by the Parliament and the Demons.
Well, it all adds up in the end.
The investigation team being understaffed.
The guards of each town and village being so small in number.
It was thought to be a small portion of Parliament, but it unexpectedly involved all of them.
Looks like His Majesty will have to elect a new Council after this.

“The plan started to derail when His Majesty became friendly with Conrad. We worked with the Demons and made plans to assassinate the Imperial Family, but

those annoying servants kept getting in the way!” [Ackroyd]

Apparently the servants had worked together to protect the Imperial Family.
The mystery behind the servants of the castle keeps getting bigger.
I’m even more sure that the servants of the castle are special.

“And then you came along, Black Knight! Everything changed when you appeared!” [Ackroyd]

Praetor Ackroyd looked at me with a distorted face.

“You took away our military authority and rearranged the guards of the villages and towns, making it difficult for us to move. Then, the assassination request for you that was put into the Shadow Guild failed. Now you are here. Curse you!” [Ackroyd]

“But…” [Ackroyd]

Ackroyd smiled fearlessly as he clenched the magic charm in his right hand.

“This is as far as you go, Black Knight. Now you will die!” [Ackroyd]

Praetor Ackroyd used the Demonic Charm, unsealing whatever was inside of it.

“Not good!” [Chie]

I held Sakuya in my left hand and used the sheath to summon a barrier over everyone around Praetor Ackroyd.
The Demonic Charm shined brightly, and the light emitted began to take shape.
The shape grew and began to break through the ceiling.

There was a loud sound as the ceiling and building collapsed around us.
When the ceiling had finished falling, the surroundings had been turned into rubble.
The barrier remained intact, and everyone inside appeared to be safe.
I focused on the barrier, modifying it to repel the rubble sitting on top of it.

“Commander, are you alright!?” [Conrad]

Conrad ran over to me.
He didn’t bother asking about what had just happened.

“No problems. How are you?” [Chie]

I asked, while returning Sakuya to my waist.
This was the first time I had used the barrier. What an amazing sheath.

“I’m unhurt as well!” [Conrad]

I felt relieved when I heard him.

“Did you create this barrier, Commander?” [Conrad]

“Oh, yes. It’s an ability of this sheath, to be more precise.” [Chie]

I answered Conrad, while observing the surroundings.
To begin with, the collapse had ended rather quickly.

“Do you see Praetor Ackroyd?” [Chie]

When they heard my question, the other soldiers rushed in and began searching.

“!?……Knight Commander!” [Soldier]

One of the men pointed to the top of a pile of rubble.
Praetor Ackroyd was standing there, wearing a fearless smile.
There was also something else.

“…..Fafnir.” [Soldier]

It stood on four legs, had a long tail and large wings, and its mouth was shaped like a beak.
Its body was covered with thick scales and was as tall as a skyscraper.
On Earth, he was a Dragon born from a curse in Norse mythology.
He frequently appeared in stories, sometimes appearing as a snake or a serpent.
The Dragons of this world are reptilian creatures and usually live in caves or secluded forests.
They would not show themselves to humans unless there was a very compelling reason.
Other types of Dragons were similar in that regard.
However, the cursed Dragon had definitely appeared before us.

Conrad’s POV

Is this for real?

I remained speechless as the cursed Dragon ‘Fafnir’ appeared before my eyes.
I didn’t know all the details, but from the stories I heard, it was a Dragon that spits poison.
Such a Dragon had descended onto the Empire.

“Hahahaha! How do you like it? Fafnir, bring oblivion to these pieces of trash in front of me!!” [Ackroyd]

Praetor Ackroyd issued a command to ‘Fafnir’.
Not good. We would be wiped out if it attacked.
We needed to retreat, but the nobles and other members were still sitting on the ground, too stunned to move.
However, the attack never came.

“Hey, Fafnir! I command you…” [Ackroyd]

—-Guoooooo!

‘Fafnir’ roared loudly, interrupting Ackroyd’s attempt to issue a command.
It was a fierce roar that made one instinctively cover their ears.
The vibration from it shook the ground.
‘Fafnir’ opened its large mouth and attacked Praetor Ackroyd.

“What are…” [Ackroyd]

—-Gucha!

‘Fafnir’ grabbed Praetor Ackroyd with its mouth.
Each time its jaws moved, the sound echoed through the ruined venue.
After ‘Fafnir’ swallowed, the surroundings became deathly quiet.

“A-ah, uwaaaaaaaah!” [???]

“M-monster!?” [???]

The nobles who had seen what had happened went into a panic.

“Conrad! Evacuate everyone right now!” [Chie]

The Commander issued an order to me, who had remained dumbfounded and motionless.
I returned to my senses.

“Hurry up! Get everyone away from here!” [Conrad]

I ordered everyone to evacuate.
We ran for a while before finally exiting the ruins.

“Black Knight, Conrad! What’s going on!?” [Adolf]

Adolf called out to us as we left the ruins.
We quickly told him what had happened until now.
As Adolf listened, his face grew pale.

“Ridiculous! That’s Fafnir!?” [Adolf]

It was a voice that didn’t want to accept the truth.
That was to be expected.
It was originally a Dragon that was more powerful than an Upper-Class Demon.
It was so powerful that even if you attacked it with the military force of an entire country, victory was not guaranteed.
Only the highest class Demon could seal such a creature.

“Demon King.” [Conrad]

It was unpleasant to think about such things.
Was it possible that the Demon King really was involved?

“Conrad.” [Chie]

When I heard the Commander’s voice, I turned to face her.

“You’re probably wondering if it’s true that the Demon King is involved. There is no doubt that it’s the truth.” [Chie]

Apparently I had been heard.
The Commander seems to have been thinking the same thing.

“Why the Demon King!? This has never happened before.” [Adolf]

Adolf said urgently.
Indeed, he was correct.
We had always had a hostile relationship, but they had never taken such drastic measures until now.
At worst, they had only partnered with criminals.
So why now…..

No, it wasn't the time to think about such things right now.

"Anyways, it's necessary to gather the entire army." [Conrad]

"But Fafnir is here now, right in front of us!" [Adolf]

Adolf said.
Again, he was correct.
By that time we managed to gather the army, it would be too late.
At worst, the Dragon would have already dumped poison on the city and wiped out the capital.

"…..Conrad, Captain Addinsell. Evacuate the people of the Shopping District to the castle. Remember to bring the nobles that were captured earlier with you." [Chie]

As I wondered what to do, the Commander unexpectedly issued orders.

"Black Knight, what?" [Adolf]

"I will entertain our guest." [Chie]

I couldn't understand the meaning of those words.
You're saying that you'll do what?
Adolf quickly caught on to what she meant.

"You idiot! Your opponent is a Dragon!" [Adolf]

I finally understood.
What was the Commander thinking!?

"Commander! What are you saying!? Wouldn't it be better to assemble the army and attack the opponent with our full force!?" [Conrad]

"It's just as Conrad said! You want to die!? We should pull back and devise a…." [Adolf]

"There's no time!" [Chie]

The Commander yelled to silence us.

"There is a solution. Look at Fafnir's abdomen." [Chie]

The Commander pointed at 'Fafnir'.

“Fafnir’s weak spot is its abdomen. If you can manage to avoid it’s attacks and strike there, you have a chance at victory.” [Chie]

Just as she said, there was a spot on ‘Fafnir’s’ abdomen that looked softer than the rest.
Certainly, if one could hit that spot, they could fatally wound ‘Fafnir’.
However, there was still a problem.

“Even so! Fafnir can spit poison! It would be impossible to avoid it all.” [Adolf]

“And if it spits poison while in the capital, it will leave lots of damage.” [Conrad]

The problem was its poison.
One wrong move could end up causing a disaster.
However, the Commander didn’t even hesitate.
She moved a little ways away from us and turned around.
The ramparts and ‘Fafnir’ were behind the Captain.

“….Hmph!” [Chie]

The Commander vigorously pierced the ground with her sword sheath.
A transparent barrier covered the entire capital, excluding the Commander and ‘Fafnir’.
I had seen the same thing just a little while ago. It appeared to be the power of the sheath of the Commander’s sword, ‘Sakuya’.

“The city will be safe.” [Chie]

The Commander said. However, when I tried to get closer, the barrier stopped me.

“Commander!?” [Conrad]

I hit the barrier with my fist, trying to get to the Commander, but it only made my arm sore.

“With this barrier up, there will be no need to worry about poison. The rest….just leave it to us.” [Chie]

I wonder if I misheard?
Did the Commander just say ‘us’?

She turned her back to us and raised her right hand, holding it in front of her.
Then, a magic circle suddenly appeared in front of her.
Is that summoning magic!?

“Come! Hayate!” [Chie]

The contracted beast was called forth through magic.
That was summoning magic.
This magic didn’t need a chant because it summoned the spirits directly.
Hayate came out of the magic circle, responding to the Commander’s words.
He slowly turned and snuggled up to the head of the Commander.
We were completely entranced by the mysterious spectacle before our eyes.

“I can deal with the poison as long as Hayate is here.” [Chie]

“Understood!” [Conrad]

I understood what the Commander meant.
Certainly, it was possible to purify the poison with the power of a ‘unicorn’.
The Commander nodded and mounted Hayate.

“Good. Now go evacuate the residents and everyone else! Do it quickly!” [Chie]

We nodded to show that we acknowledged her words.
We had felt in our hearts just now that if it was this person, it just might be possible.
We strongly felt this.

“We’re going, Hayate!” [Chie]

“Bururu!” [Hayate]

The Commander quickly galloped away on Hayate, holding ‘Sakuya’ in her right hand.
We hurried to the Shopping District to carry out our orders.
Please Commander, you must absolutely return!

Chapter 16

Chapter 16 – Dragon & Speculation

“Well, it’s good that I’m here and all, but now I have to figure out how to deal with this.” [Chie]

I thought while looking up at Fafnir, who stood before me.
Fafnir, they said.

—-Gururururururur~tsu.

It growled as it glared at Hayate and myself.
It gave off an evil aura befitting its nickname of ‘Cursed Dragon’.
That was the feeling I got from the dragon.
It was quite large when looking at it from such a close distance. The dragon moved like a tortoise, taking large, staggering steps while keeping a low center of gravity.
Even with Sakuya, assuming it was as powerful as the holy sword, I would only be able to leave a small scratch on those scales.
Therefore, I increased the sharpness of Sakuya by pouring my magic into it.
Holy Swords unleashed their inherent power by absorbing the magic of their owners.

Yuusuke has Dynamis, which exudes sword pressure when absorbing his magic.
However, the constant absorption of magic could exhaust the body.
My opponent was also a dragon that could take flight with its wings.
Although there are some things I would like to test, it would take a large amount of magic to attempt them.
As it stands, it was still much better to attack the abdomen, as originally planned.
You could pierce it from the back, which would likely injure its internal organs.
You could also pierce or cut off the head, which is the duty of the sword.
Still, it was best to aim for the abdomen.

After deciding, I edged closer to Fafnir.
When I did so, black smoke started to leak from Fafnir's mouth.
It's Fafnir's poison.
It inhaled a large breath and it looked like we were bound for the world of the dead.
Regardless, Hayate started running.
At the same time, Fafnir rose up into the air and let out its poisonous breath.
I felt intense wind pressure and a portion of the rampart was blown away. A large amount of black poison filled the area.
Hayate's horn glowed with magic and began to purify the poison around us.

"It's way more than I thought." [Chie]

We couldn't see anything around us because of the black, poisonous smoke.
I thought about the amount of damage that would have been done to the city if I had not put up the barrier.
Unpleasant sweat began to flow down my back.
If we couldn't finish this quickly, things would turn bad.

"Hayate, I'll make a path." [Chie]

"Bururuu!" [Hayate]

I visualized an image in my mind and yelled.

"Black Road!" [Chie]

I activated the magic that I had created with my imagination.
On activation, a black road that was one meito wide appeared in front of us and extended towards the sky for several meitos.
This was the magic that I created in order to fight flying opponents.
When I went to the lake with Hayate, I realized that if you casted magic to stretch across a boundary and then made it sturdy like a scaffold, you would be able to move across it.
As I thought, it made a strong foothold.
Hayate stepped onto it and began running.
As we ran, new footholds were created ahead of us, while the ones behind us disappeared.

The idea was to keep the road as short as possible to conserve magic.

The drawback of this spell was the constant release of magic that was required.
Therefore, if I kept this magic up for too long, I would not be able to supply Sakuya with magic.
I could pour magic into it just as I attacked, but then I ran the risk of becoming exhausted and the battle would be lost.
However, it couldn't be said to be lucky or unlucky for Fafnir, the 'Cursed Dragon'.
Sakuya had the same effects as the dragon's poison, 'Malice' and 'Curse'.
That's why it was my win if I could cut into its abdomen.
I firmly grasped Sakuya while riding Hayate.
When we exited the black poison, we were high enough that the capital looked much smaller.
The ground below was completely covered in black poison, to the point I couldn't tell what was below my feet any more.
I glared at Fafnir.

He let out a low growl and flapped his huge wings as he moved to prepare the next attack.
I concentrated on avoiding and looking for the right opening.
It opened its mouth wide and thrusted its head forward to bite us.
We immediately advanced upward.
It was agile despite its size.
It also kept its abdomen well guarded while attacking. I couldn't win by normal means.
We spun around after retreating to a safe distance and noticed that it was ready to spew poison from its mouth. Then it unleashed another breath at us.

"!" [Chie]

Caught off guard, I sent Hayate to the right as we ran.
Black flames were discharged from Fafnir's mouth.
It was a much larger flame than I thought it would be.
A massive amount of hot air engulfed us.
I didn't feel the heat at all, thanks to the armor, but the wind pressure created by the heat was immense and I clung to Hayate,
Hayate was also fine with the heat and we lowered our altitude in order to avoid

being blown away.
The breath ended and the area where the poison used to be was revealed. I was finally able to see the damage the poison had done to the surroundings.
All the trees in the forest that once spread out from the walls were dead and withered wherever the poison had touched.
What was once a lush forest and wilderness was now a wasteland where not even a shadow could appear.

“Prolonging this fight could seriously be bad.” [Chie]

It would be great if I could finish this quickly.
Even though the capital was being protected by the barrier, the environment surrounding the capital was not.

“Hayate, let’s finish this.” [Chie]

Hayate stamped his hooves in response.
We vigorously sprinted towards Fafnir.
I took a deep breath and sent magic into Sakuya.
At the same time, Fafnir started to prepare another breath.
I immediately made the road reach above Fafnir and Hayate sprinted up.
Fafnir released its breath just as we arrived above it.

“Okay, here I go!” [Chie]

I stood up on Hayate’s back and jumped away.
I continued to make the road for Hayate as I prepared Sakuya and fell towards Fafnir.
The breath grazed by me in the next moment.
I used the speed of my fall to increase my momentum.

“Haaaaaaaaaaaa!” [Chie]

I raised my voice and held up Sakuya, grasping tightly.
When I passed its neck, I thrusted Sakuya into it and applied all of my magic.
Sakuya cut into the neck and continued all the way down Fafnir’s body.

—-Gugaaaaaaaa!

Fafnir let out a roar of pain.
I continued to fall towards the ground after pulling out Sakuya but was caught

by Hayate, who was waiting below.
I grabbed the reins and moved us out from under Fafnir.
Fafnir, who was in so much pain that it could no longer fly, fell to the ground head first.
The dragon smashed into the ground, creating a tremendous tremor.
Since Fafnir was so heavy, it created a crater in the ground.

"Hah, hah, hah." [Chie]

The fallen Fafnir didn't move.
As I looked down at the sight, I attempted to control my breath, which had become ragged.
I seemed to have used too much magic.
My head was spinning.
I checked one more time to make sure Fafnir wasn't moving before heading back to the capital.

Emperor POV

I looked towards the direction that the dragon had fallen.

"It's over? As expected of the Black Knight." [Emperor]

"……." [???]

The person standing next to me had a face that said that they couldn't believe it and stared in the direction that the dragon had fallen.

"Incredible…one person, against that dragon." [???]

"Honestly, even I didn't think he would be that strong." [Emperor]

I felt something boundless from Chie the first time I met her.
At the time, I felt that, if it was this person, the current empire might be able to change.
That was why, without hesitation and against overwhelming opposition, I gave her the highest position.
A gamble, so to say.
A massive bet, with the future of our kingdom on the line.

“…But still, don’t you think it’s dangerous? That person’s power is too much. It’s possible that they may end up drowning in it.” [???]

The person asked me with an uneasy look.
However, after talking with Chie, who was a human, I clearly understood.
That person would never use their power for self-interest.
Actually, according to what Conrad had said of the last few weeks, her desires are rather lacking.
‘This is normal’ is her favorite phrase, or so he claims.
In addition, he mentioned that although she is not angered by slander directed at herself, she takes great offense when others are treated disrespectfully.
It was very unlikely that such a person would be lost in her own power.

“There will never be a time when that person falls to their own power. Rather, that person is simply too good of a person at times, according to Conrad.” [Emperor]

“But, your Majesty…” [???]

To object even now.
There is no other way.

“How about this. There will be a daily report of the actions and movements of the Black Knight. In time, you will understand how reliable the Black Knight is.” [Emperor]

“…And if I am not convinced?” [???]

“Then do as you like.” [Emperor]

I said with great confidence.
I am certain that I will win this gamble.

“But, if they are able to convince you, we will move forward with the plan that we have been considering for some time.” [Emperor]

“!? The Black Knight!” [???]

I believe Chie is most suited for that role.
Her red cloak and position of Duke, alongside her rank of Knight Commander were all in preparation for this.

I expect great things from her in the future.
I smile while thinking of all the good things to come, looking at the moon floating high in the sky from my castle window.

Chie's POV

Moving away from where Fafnir fell, we landed near the sheath I had stabbed into the ground.
'My head feels hazy', I think to myself as I descend from Hayate.
The sheath was plucked out and Sakuya was returned to it, before I placed it back onto my waist.
At that moment, the barrier surrounding the capital was dispelled.

"Phew~, all finished." [Chie]

—-Thud

Feeling completely relieved, I collapsed on the spot.
Hayate approached me and rubbed his head on mine.
His horn glowed with magic power, and I felt my energy returning.
I stroke his head with my right hand.
…Way too much stuff happened tonight.
The attack on the auction venue went pretty much as planned, but that Fafnir being summoned was completely unexpected.
Not to mention demons being involved.
Since Yuusuke would not be summoned for four more years, the thought that the Demons would already be moving hadn't crossed my mind.
Thinking about it, I came to this world by chance.
I just want to go back to the Castle and rest.
The power required to fight against that elite monster was incomparable to anything I've done yet. I'm wiped.
For the first time since coming to this world, I'm truly tired.

"!?" [Chie]

Feeling a strange presence, I quickly placed my hand onto Sakuya.
This presence…isn't human.

“Hohou, to notice my presence. As expected of the one who defeated Fafnir.” [???]

A man in a butler-like suit stood tall on a nearby building, broadcasting his pompous voice and glaring with his crimson eyes..
His hair was white, fine, and well-cut.
I can only see his face from afar, but he looks to be a handsome man with a tall, slender stature and a clean appearance.
He looks strikingly human; the only tell was his pointy ears and fangs.

“Vampire.” [Chie]

I could tell from a single look.

“Hoh, you understood what I am from a simple glance.” [???]

“No, I think anyone could tell just by looking at you.” [Chie]

I spat back.

“My name is Brad.” [Brad]

I was ignored!
Moreover, I‘m completely surprised that a vampire showed up!!

“…Oh~, are you perhaps working alongside demons like Gardo?” [Chie]

Recovering slightly, I posed that question.
I need to determine what his intention is before taking action.
Confirming the situation before taking action is a good choice.

“That’s right. I was the one who approached the Parliament of this country and struck a deal. We agreed to not harm this country in exchange for some humans.” [Brad]

“In any case, it’s a trivial matter. They’re all worthless trash anyways, don’t you think?” [Brad]

Brad grinned and laughed as he spoke.

“Not a single decent one among the bunch. Well, it was fun watching the country slowly destroy itself, but thanks to you the plan is ruined.” [Brad]

He says in a voice that is clearly trying to intimidate me.

“You peasant.”

He said in a foul tone.
As I thought, another unpleasant situation found me.

“Okay, so what now? We can either try to kill each other, or you can withdraw.” [Chie]

Thanks to Hayate, I recovered some of my stamina so I can probably survive for a bit.
This guy really gives off a sadistic aura. He probably likes to watch humans suffer before killing them off.
So many things have been happening behind the scenes, so I’m kind of pissed off.

“…No, many things need to be prepared before one fights against you. This time, I will withdraw.” [Brad]

Brad raises his hand to indicate there is no will to fight.

“There will eventually be a day when you and I fight each other. Farewell for now.” [Brad]

He faded into the darkness as he said those parting words.

“Eh~ give me a break already, now there’s two I have to keep an eye out for…” [Chie]

I sigh deeply as I climb onto Hayate and ride back to the castle.
When we arrived, the soldiers were waiting for us.

“Congratulation, Knight Commander!!” [Solder]

“Sir Knight, are there no injuries!?” [Citizen]

The shopping district was full of citizens and soldiers.
I was surprised by the surge of people as I returned.

“Ah~yes.” [Chie]

I was stunned and was unsure how to answer.

“Commander!” [Conrad]

That familiar voice pulled me out of my panicked state.

“Conrad!” [Chie]

I call out in response to his voice.
Despite the ruckus, hearing his voice instantly puts me at ease.
Conrad ran up to me.

“Commander, you’re safe!” [Conrad]

“Oh, I’m fine.” [Chie]

I said as I dismounted Hayate.
As tired as I may be, I have no issues walking.

“Fafnir is dead outside the city. It’s fine to retrieve the scales and teeth tomorrow. Oh, we should also get a priest or priestess to purify the body as soon as possible.” [Chie]

Even though Fafnir is dead, it doesn’t mean the power of the ‘Cursed Dragon’ has disappeared.
We can retrieve the materials from its corpse to make armor and weapons, but it’s best to purify it first.
Though, I feel the curse would be weakened since I used Sakuya.
It shouldn’t take too long to purify.

“Hah~, as usual, I’m completely surprised by you.” [Conrad]

Conrad said with a vexed smile.
I wonder if I worried him too much?

“Sorry…I worried you.” [Chie]

I apologized at once.
Indeed, confronting a dragon alone would normally be considered suicide.
I must properly reflect on this!

“Indeed…is what I would like to say, however, I think this time around I would have only been a burden.” [Conrad]

Conrad said with a sigh.
I give a small smile behind my helmet.

“Sir Knight!” [Byron]

“Byron!” [Chie]

I turn around once I heard Byron’s voice, and noticed Aaron was with him as well.

“I was surprised, Sir Knight.” [Aaron]

Aaron said with a laugh.
His loose expression doesn’t hold the disgust it had when we first met.

“To face a dragon, and alone at that!” [Byron]

“No, I wasn’t alone. I had Hayate with me.” [Chie]

I said in response to Byron while stroking Hayate.
He responded cheerfully.

“Gahahahaha! As usual, you haven’t changed a bit.” [Byron]

He chuckled in amusement.

“You know it wouldn’t hurt to act a little more prideful, right?” [Aaron]

Aaron said while amazed.

“No, I’m just a normal person though?” [Chie]

“What about you is normal!?” [Aaron]

Aaron yelled that pretty loud.
Rude.

“It’s useless. The Commander always insists ‘I’m normal’. I’ve tried to point out the pride bit before, but it’s been shot down immediately as distasteful.” [Conrad]

“…How difficult for you.” [Aaron]

“What of it? I just don’t think it’s right of me to treat others as lower than myself!” [Chie]

I argue to refute them.

“Okay, okay. It just goes to show the greatness of Sir Knight.” [Byron]

Byron cuts in between the two with a laugh.
I still don’t think I’m that great, though.

Is the change in the air due to the expression on their faces?
They seem happy, but I get the feeling they're still not satisfied.

"Well~, that's fine and all. Thought I'm pretty tired after all that, so I think I'll turn in early." [Chie]

Hearing my words, Conrad entered a state of panic.

"Commander! By chance were you hurt somewhere!?" [Conrad]

"No, I'm just dizzy since I used a lot of magic." [Chie]

Conrad had a look of relief once he heard my words.

"Is that so? Okay then." [Conrad]

Such a relieved expression. Conrad's a worrywart.

"That's right, your opponent was a dragon! You have good reason to be tired!" [Byron]

Byron said that, turned around, and starting yelling at people to open up the road.
Everyone moved aside, creating a road to the castle.

"Sir Knight, if you could ride the Unicorn on the road to the castle? Everyone wants to see the hero of this country, after all." [Aaron]

Conrad and Byron nodded in agreement.
While getting a tingling feeling when he said 'hero', I mounted Hayate.
Cheers were rising from all around me.

"Let's head back to the castle, Commander." [Conrad]

"Ah." [Chie]

I nodded and slowly rode Hayate to the castle.
The cheers wrapped around me the whole way.
Feeling embarrassed and slightly happy, I returned to the castle.

Chapter 17

Chapter 17 – Future Talks

The day that followed Fafnir's defeat was very somber.
First, the members of Parliament who had been captured were interrogated.
It was also decided by His Majesty and the Prime Minister that the Captains and Vice-Captains would fill the roles of government officials until a new Parliament was established.
Then, all the Darkness Guild members were rounded up and arrested, thanks to Claude.
A rescue unit was also sent out to liberate all the people who were kidnapped.
Most of the rescued people were returned to their hometowns, but there were many children who had no relatives and no home to return to.
Therefore, I petitioned His Majesty to bring the children back to the capital and to build an orphanage run by people who were willing to take care of them. The request was quickly granted.
The orphanage ended up also accepting children who were found homeless in the slums.
The purpose of this orphanage was to provide basic education to these children, giving them a goal in life.
Funding for the orphanage came from and was managed by the castle.
It took approximately one week to build, thanks to the mages and carpenters working in cooperation to build it quickly.
The humans of this world move fast.

The futures of the foreign nobles who had bought and sold the slaves was decided during the time the orphanage was being built.
The foreign nobles would all be judged by the laws of the Empire.
In this world, it was common sense that if you stayed inside another country, you would be judged by their laws.
Therefore, even if another country made a complaint, it would be asserted that "Since they committed a crime in our country, they will be judged by our laws."

Even if they tried to put up a defence, we had accumulated a large amount of evidence against them, so they would be judged quite heavily.
It was the same for this country's Parliament members.
If you were willing to commit the crime, you couldn't complain about the punishment.
His Majesty has begun to petition the leaders of the surrounding countries to return the people who had been sold and taken out of the country.
It became an international issue so the situation became rather serious.
It will be a long time before the awkward situation between the countries is resolved.

With all these various things going on, Claude's introduction to His Majesty was given two weeks after Fafnir's defeat.
Claude had also been moving around to subdue the Darkness Guild during those two weeks, which delayed the introduction.
I nearly laughed at how rigid Claude became during his introduction to His Majesty.
I explained the situation to His Majesty and Claude officially received the position of "Imperial Army Covert Investigator".
Claude was so rigid that the two of us went to the 'Wild Breath Tavern' to celebrate his official employment when the introduction ended.
I introduced Claude as a friend to all the other customers.
When Claude asked me why I was drinking non-alcoholic drinks, I reluctantly explained the previous incident and he burst into laughter.
I got pissed so I gave him a good punch, bare-handed of course, and it turned into a brawl.
Well, it was all in good fun though.

After that, something happened that left me completely surprised.
The stupid swordsman came up to me and apologized.
He even lowered his head.
Really, I was surprised by the display.
Apparently, he promised Conrad to apologize to me if this incident was resolved.
I didn't even know that such a promise had taken place.
I hit the stupid swordsman's head with my fist, bare-handed of course.
I remember that, when he protested, I grabbed him by the collar and shouted.

“Like I said, there are others you should apologize to, not me!!” [Chie]

I said while pointing at Conrad.
I explained why I was angry to the dumbfounded stupid swordsman.
For him to have not even apologized to Conrad yet. There are only so many things I can take from this guy.
After understanding the situation, he wholeheartedly apologized to Conrad, who seemed to forgive him.
The stupid swordsman also asked me to withdraw the nickname but it was rejected, since the other two seemed to have grown fond of it.
What can I say. This nickname is just easier to say.
As a result, the stupid swordsman ran away crying.
A grown man, crying.
After that, one week passed.

Orphanage

“Hey kids! I brought some sweets with me.” [Chie]

I used my first day off in three weeks to visit the orphanage with Alice.

“Ohhh! It’s the Black Knight!” [Small Boy]

After one of the boys called out, the children gathered around me.
When I had first seen the dark expressions of the children who were left homeless after being kidnapped, I had been shocked.
I heard that their expressions had become brighter recently, so I used the pretense of carrying out an inspection to drop by and deliver sweets.
No doubt, it was due to the hard work of the staff.
There were many children so nearly a dozen men and women were needed to care for them.

“Black Knight-sama!” [Staff Member]

“Welcome! Please come in!” [Staff Member]

The staff members also came out one by one.
They seem to have become rather stiff.

“No need to be so tense. I just thought I’d stop by and share these with

everyone.” [Chie]

I handed over the large bag of sweets and cakes to one of the staff members.

“Oh! Had we known, we would have sent someone to retrieve these for you!” [Staff Member]

The staff member said, while showing varying expressions.

“No, no, it was just a sudden thought I had before I came. Don’t mind it.” [Chie]

I told the staff member while waving both of my hands in front of my chest.
At the same time as the conversation was taking place-

“Wha-!” [Chie]

I was surprised by a sudden pull on my cloak.
When I looked behind me, I saw some children holding the cloak and looking up at me.

“Hey, kids! You shouldn’t do that to the Duke!” [Staff Member]

“It’s okay, it’s okay. What is it?” [Chie]

I calmed the panicking staff member before directing my sight back towards the children.

“Ah…” [Small Boy]

“Hrm?” [Chie]

One of the small boys seemed to want to say something.
I tilted my head a little, curious about what he wanted.

“Ah, let’s play!” [Small Boy]

The boy built up his courage and spoke loudly.
It was so cute that I twitched slightly, restraining the urge to hug him.
When I looked around, I saw that the other children also looked like they wanted to play.

“Yeah, let’s play!” [Chie]

The children’s faces instantly brightened and when I held out my hands, they

immediately began to pull me outside.

“Alice, I’m going to go play with the kids for a bit.” [Chie]

“Yes, I shall prepare your tea.” [Alice]

She said and returned a smile.
The staff just stood there with funny expressions on their faces.

“Let’s have some fu-wawawa! Hey, be careful! Dragging people is dangerous!” [Chie]

The children began to pull harder and I was forcibly taken outside.

Orphanage Square

After being taken out to the courtyard by the children, I faced a problem.

“Playing Knights is fine!” [Small Boy]

“No! Let’s play House!” [Small Girl]

The opinions of the girls and the boys were spectacularly divided.

“Stupid! The Black Knight is here! Obviously we should play Knights!!” [Small Boy]

The boys insisted on playing pretend Knights because there was a Knight (me) present.

“No! The Black Knight will play the father! Just accept it!!” [Small Girl]

The girls wanted to take turns in the mom role, while I was appointed the father role.
Since they were cute little children, they each had their own opinions.
However, it became a fight because of that.
This situation is a first for me, so I’m not sure what I should do.

“Then, let the Black Knight decide!” [Small Boy]

“Fine!” [Small Girl]

Before I knew it, I was given the deciding vote.

“Black Knight-sama!” [Small Girl]

“Pretend Knights or House, which one?” [Small Boy & Small Girl]

They asked in unison.
It would be nice if we could play something with both the boys and the girls.
That’s it!

“Everyone, would you like to play a game from my hometown?” [Chie]

When I said so, they all tilted their heads in curiosity.

Alice’s POV

The staff and I began to prepare the tea.

“Haah~ is it really alright? Letting them do such a thing to the Black Knight.” [Male Staff Member]

One of the male staff members asked, apologetically.

“It’s alright. Rather, Black Knight-sama seemed pleased.” [Alice]

I said to the man, with a small laugh and a smile.
I couldn’t see through the helmet, but Black Knight-sama was certainly laughing.

“Besides, Black Knight-sama is always going around saying ‘This is normal’ and never acts arrogant around other people.” [Alice]

The staff all gave me a blank look.
It was so funny that I couldn’t help laughing a little.

“That person shows respect for the people that deserve it, regardless of their status. Because of this, he is known as ‘Sir Knight’ to many of the commoners in the capital. That remains true even now.” [Alice]

“…Such a mysterious person.” [Female Staff Member]

One of the female staff members said.
I smiled and arranged the tea and cake on the dining room table.

“Everyone, the tea and cake has been prepared.” [Alice]

“””Yay~!”””

On my call, the children began rushing into the building.

“Hey, hey! Be sure to wash your hands first!” [Chie]

“””Yessss!”””

Black Knight-sama said from behind the children, who responded cheerfully.

“Well done, Black Knight-sama.” [Alice]

“Thank you. Ah~, a child’s endurance is amazing~.” [Chie]

Black Knight-sama said while stretching.
It seems like the children had a wonderful time.

“What kind of game did you end up playing?” [Alice]

I asked.
At a glance, it looked like the boys and the girls had played together. I wonder what sort of game it could be?
As far as I knew, the girls usually played house, while the boys ran around pretending to be soldiers or knights. It was rare for them to play together.

“Oh, it was a game of onigokko–tag that I used to play in my hometown.” [Chie]

“Oni? Something to do with demons?” [Alice]

Hearing the word demon, I thought of goblins.
A very strange game.
The girls played as well?

“Pfft!” [Chie]

However, Black Knight-sama suddenly made a noise, as if she was desperately stifling a laugh.

“Eh, what?” [Alice]

“Ah, sorry. You’d probably think like that since you heard the word oni.” [Chie]

Black Knight-sama said with trembling shoulders.
I tilted my head in puzzlement.

“Even though I said ‘oni’ which means demon, it’s more like a role. Someone is designated as a ‘demon’ and everyone else has to stay away from that person. The ‘demon’ counts to ten in a predetermined area, while the others take some distance from that person. After counting to ten, the ‘demon’ chases the others,

who try to flee. When the ‘demon’ touches another person, the person who is touched becomes the new ‘demon’. That person then counts to ten and the game continues.” [Chie]

Once it was explained, I understood how both the boys and the girls were able to play.

“I see. It seems like the boys and girls were able to happily play together.” [Alice]

“They were arguing about what to play at first, but when I suggested a new game, they were hooked.” [Chie]

They were probably really excited, since it was their first time playing it.

“Certainly, that game would have quite a bit of activity to it.” [Alice]

“Activity, huh…” [Chie]

Black Knight-sama muttered and crossed her arms.

“Is there a problem?” [Alice]

“…I think I could use this game to help the Mage Corps with their stamina training.” [Chie]

I tried to imagine the scene in my head.
Black Knight-sama chasing the Mage Corps members around the training grounds with a sword.
……

“An excellent idea.” [Alice]

I said with a laugh, smiling.
It will likely prove effective.

“Okay! Let’s incorporate it into the training!” [Chie]

Black Knight-sama said with a shout.
Mage Corps members, please do your best.

Chie’s POV

“Now then, let’s have some tea. Everyone is probably waiting.” [Alice]

“Gotcha. Go on ahead.” [Chie]

I hadn’t washed my hands yet, so I sent Alice ahead with the kids.
Before they left, Alice told me that the food would be served in the dining area.
I went up to the wells and removed my gauntlets to wash my hands.
The gauntlets were dirty, so I washed them as well.
I didn’t think they would enjoy the game of tag so much.
It was a game with lots of activity, like Alice said, but the children enjoyed it fully.
I’ll try to incorporate it into the Mage Corps training.
With the use of weapons, of course.
Hopefully, we will see good results. If nothing else, it will be a good experience.
Be prepared, Mage Corps.

I discarded the dirty water while thinking of such things.
Well, I can’t afford to make the children wait any longer, so let’s head to the dining hall.
I walked to the dining room while reminiscing about the events up until now.
Just over a month has passed since I came to this world.
I can’t stop thinking about all of the sudden events that have happened.
The Demons and Parliament working hand in hand was quite a ridiculous affair.
I think the next members will need to be chosen with extreme care.
Claude had been doing a lot of work with the Parliament lately, so he took a break by going to the tavern.
I was tired as well, so I came here to take a break.
I think something about seeing the kids laughing and playing is good for the heart and mind.
We can’t say it’s completely resolved until all the people who were sold are returned home, but seeing the smiling faces of the ones we had saved made me think it was a good thing.
The journey ahead might be long and difficult, but that doesn’t mean that we shouldn’t keep moving forward.
I just need to do the things I can do. That’s about it.
I was thinking while walking and I quickly arrived in front of the dining room.
I raised my hand and gently opened the door.

“Ah! You finally came!” [Small Child]

“Eh~! You’re late!” [Small Child]

When I finally arrived, the waiting children spoke openly.

“Black Knight-sama, let’s eat together!” [Small Girl]

One of the girls grabbed my hand and took me to a seat.
Alice was sitting to the left of my spot.

“Welcome back, Black Knight-sama.” [Alice]

Alice said with a smile and a laugh.

“Come on everybody, let’s pray.” [Female Staff Member]

One of the female staff members said to the children.
The children clasped their hands together and prayed.
In this world, you put both hands together for about ten seconds and silently prayed before a meal.
It was the equivalent of ‘Itadakimasu’ in Japan.
I lived in Japan for 17 years, so it was sort of automatic for me.

“Itadakimasu.” [Chie]

I put both hands together and said it in Japanese.
The children and staff stared at me.
Alice, as always, didn’t seem to care, but it was kind of embarrassing because I had raised my voice when every one else was silent.

“Ah, that.” [Chie]

“Hey, what was that?” [Small Girl]

As I wondered what I should do, the small girl sitting next to me asked a question and pulled me back from my thoughts.

“I said ‘Itadakimasu’. It’s an expression from my hometown to show thanks for the food. We say it before eating a meal.” [Chie]

Everyone listened intently and seemed intrigued.
Incidentally, I taught Alice the meaning of the word the first day I met her.

“Hey! Let’s all say it together now!!” [Small Girl]

The girl next to me called out to everyone.

The children all nodded together.

“Black Knight-sama, we would like to say it together with you.” [Staff Member]

The staff also seemed to want to participate.
Alice also nodded, with a smile on her face.
Well, let’s do it then!

“Alright everyone, repeat after me.” [Chie]

I held both hands together and waited for everyone else to do the same.

“Itadakimasu.” [Chie]

I said in Japanese.
Everyone else repeated.

“Etaydehkaymakesew.” [Everyone]

I have no idea what they just said.
Apparently, it was difficult for the human beings of this world to pronounce Japanese.
This was the first time I learned about this since coming to the world of Erudoa.

Chapter 18

Chapter 18 – Everyday Talk & Care

Within the Empire of a certain world.

　It has been six months since I came to this world of Erudoa.
The current season was now Autumn.
I knew because the changing colors of the leaves had changed the scenery of the landscape.
When mentioning fall, Autumn Appetite, Autumn Reading, or Autumn Nap would be the expressions one would normally talk about.
As for me…

　“Hahaha! It’s useless if all you do is run away~” [Chie]

　——Gyaaaaaaa!

　I was chasing the Mage Corps members around with Sakuya.
Fall Sports were in full swing.
We had been using the training method that was originally created from the game of tag.
As for the contents, I played the role of the demon and chased the Mage Corps members for about an hour.
Once a member was caught, he was stunned with a strike from the back of Sakuya. A hellish muscle training course would await them when they woke up.
The use of weapons was allowed, of course!
However, not a single one of them have had the time to fight back.

　“Hey, hey! If you only run away, you’ll just end up like those guys!” [Chie]

　I said and pointed to the guys who had already been caught.
So far, 50 people were receiving this training.
Among those, 30 people had been piled up and put to sleep.
The rest of the Mage Corps members turned pale upon seeing this and ran away.
Alright! This is fun!

There were still 15 minutes left.
Well, I wonder how many can survive.

Chie's Work Room

As usual, after morning training, Conrad and I were in my work room organizing documents.
Like always, I had taken off my helmet during this period.
There was a ridiculous amount of paperwork, like always, but we couldn't help getting it done.

"Ah~, my neck hurts." [Chie]

I heard a wonderful cracking sound as I turned my neck.

"Just a bit more to do, Commander…probably." [Conrad]

Conrad said, while going through the documents.
Uhn~, a man who works diligently looks cool.
Good looking, diligent, considerate, good judge of character; a very ideal man.
It's impossible to believe what he used to be like, although I had heard to stories of it from Alice and the people of the shopping district.

"What is it?" [Conrad]

Conrad asked when he noticed my gaze.

"Oh, sorry. No, well, I was just thinking, it's hard to believe that the person sitting in front of me is the same person from the stories that Alice and Byron told." [Chie]

"…What the heck are you talking about?" [Conrad]

Conrad asked with reproachful eyes.

"I mean, a delinquent who led a gang and got into disputes over territory while indiscriminately chasing women, shouting 'Found another good one!!'" [Chie]

"They really told you that?" [Conrad]

Conrad hastily interrupted me as his face became deep red.
Just from his appearance, you could really understand that he was surprised.

I only wanted to tease him a little, but I didn't think I would get this sort of reaction from Conrad.
He had a bright red embarrassed face that was full of despair, like it was the end of the world.
To showing such an expression…I guess he really didn't want it to be known?

"W-Well, everyone has a period of time when they're young and act out, so it's not strange!" [Chie]

Things like that could happen now and then, so I think it's alright.
Come to think of it, my older brother was difficult to handle when he was in high school.
He would bring home friends who looked like delinquents (though they were all actually really kind).
He also had a new girlfriend every month.
Other than his female relationships, he was a good brother.
Surely, Conrad must have been like this as well.

"My older brother was also like that, Conrad! So, it's nothing you really need to be ashamed about!" [Chie]

"Older brother?" [Conrad]

Conrad reacted to the words 'older brother' and made a blank expression.
I had never talked about him before.

"What's this older brother like?" [Conrad]

"Oh, he's two years older than me. Like I said before, there was a time when he was a little delinquent. He's a good brother, though. Once in awhile, I'd look outside and see him with the neighbor girl, and, if you ask me, that's when he started to act strange…" [Chie]

"…(I cannot even begin to picture the Commander's brother)." [Conrad]

Conrad kept silent, with a surprised expression.
I thought, 'you probably can't picture my brother's personality just from looking at me'.
The reason being, we were not similar at all.

"Right, such a person." [Conrad]

“Yeah. Let alone my older brother, I wonder how Mother and Father are doing?” [Chie]

“You haven’t kept in contact with them?” [Conrad]

Conrad said, with a surprised expression.
Perhaps he thought that I would have contacted them by now.
Though, not only was it a different world, but also a different time, so communication was impossible.
Unless I met Amaterasu again, it was unlikely that I would ever see them again.

“Communication is difficult, to the point that it can’t happen, much less being able to meet again.” [Chie]

“……” [Conrad]

I said to Conrad while forcing a smile, then turned silent.
In response to my smile, Conrad also fell silent.
I averted my gaze from Conrad and looked out the window.
Outside, the blue sky spread far out into the distance.
A sky that was the same color as the one on Earth.
I suddenly felt very lonely and looked at that sky for a while.

*****Conrad’s POV*****

I witnessed the Commander’s lonely expression for the first time.
I wonder where the place, that was so far away from communication that she could never go back to it again, was.
A place where humans with the same hair and eye color as the Commander lived.
It was most certainly a place across the ocean, where nobody had ever gone before.
A place with many soldiers and exceptional people like the Commander.
People capable of defeating the cursed dragon Fafnir.
The Commander was only 17 years old, so maybe her brother was even more amazing.
However, I wonder why the Commander came to this Empire.
In addition to that, she had armor and a weapon made exclusively for herself.
Perhaps there was some sort of purpose in doing so.
Could it be related to the suspicious movements of the demons from six months

ago?
If that was so, maybe the Commander had been chosen to resolve this incident.
It was enough to have been selected by the black unicorn.
Surely, her home country could contend with two of our countries.
Her swordsmanship and hands, covered in hard skin, could only be obtained after a high amount of training and discipline with the sword. I believed that she would become a great person.
I thought this while I organized the documents.

*****Chie's POV*****

Huh?
Just now, Conrad didn't respond to my smile?
I don't think he could have had some weird misunderstanding just now…
That sort of thing for example.
Like, my parents being taken while climbing a mountain and me being forced into a serious survival situation, or something like that.
Actually, last year, for summer vacation, I went mountain climbing alone with nothing but a few large bags and a survival knife.
Once, I saw a bear, and I thought my heart had stopped.
I wonder what kind of funny expression my brother would have made?
Ah, this is pointless.
I have to focus on finishing filing the documents.
I decided to stop reminiscing and started moving my hands again.

"Phew~! It's done!!" [Chie]

"I am also finished over here." [Conrad]

We had cleared up all of the documents as the day turned towards evening.
There was a sense of accomplishment when completing work, compared to training soldiers.

"Thank you for your hard work, Black Knight-sama, elder brother." [Alice]

Alice said as she came out from the inner room.
Until a little while ago, she had been cleaning.

"Thank you, Alice. The days have certainly been getting shorter." [Chie]

I said while receiving coffee from her.

“Yes, it has been quite cool in the mornings and chilly at night.” [Alice]

Alice agreed.
I sipped the coffee.
Yes, it was also delicious today.
This coffee heals me.

“Hrm?” [Chie]

“Is something the matter, Black Knight-sama?” [Alice]

I sensed a presence from the veranda as Alice tilted her head in confusion.
It seemed that Conrad was also unaware of it.
To completely erase his presence like this, he’s showing off now.
I instinctively put on my helmet and moved to the veranda door.

—-Gacha

“What’s the situation in the town, Claude?” [Chie]

As I opened the doors, I called out to Claude.

“So far, no problems. Watching you get rid of Fafnir has made the people on the back side of town quiet down.” [Claude]

He unfolded his arms while hiding in the shade of the veranda, standing with his back against the wall.
It was just the right time of day for the veranda to become dark.
I brought Claude into the room.
There wasn’t really a worry about being seen, since it was the fourth floor, but there was no need to be careless.

“Oh, it was you, Claude.” [Conrad]

“Hello, Conrad-san.” [Claude]

Conrad exchanged greetings with Claude.
A black scarf was covering his face from below his neck up to his nose.
These two had become good friends in the last six months.
Rather than colleagues, they acted like brothers.

“Oh, Claude, hello.” [Alice]

Alice said with a smile and a slight laugh.
With flushed cheeks,

“Y-Yo! Alice.” [Claude]

Claude replied.
These two seemed so innocent when you looked at them.
I removed the helmet and sent them a warm gaze.

“…What’s with the look?” [Claude]

Claude noticed my gaze.

“Nothing~” [Chie]

I looked away while grinning.

“…You, acting like that is why you’ll never get a boyfriend.” [Claude]

—-Twitch

Claude’s mutter tapered off and my cheeks started to cramp.

“What now, coming from someone who stands around doing nothing?” [Chie]

I drew closer to Claude as I asked him.

“Just like I said.” [Claude]

Claude said.
Well, does this guy like getting beat?

“Ah~, come to think of it, Commander, since when have you been wearing that belt?” [Conrad]

Just when I was about to beat up Claude, Conrad unexpectedly spoke up.

“Oh this? It was sent over by Byron a week ago.” [Chie]

“It’s from Byron?” [Alice]

Alice asked while tilting her head.
The other two gave a similar reaction.

“Yeah, I’m wearing it because I think it suits me. It’s made from the skin of

Fafnir.” [Chie]

One of the servants brought it to me a week ago, while I was working alone.
I received it in a long, narrow box.
A letter, which was enclosed in the box, expressed the appreciation of the people from the shopping district and also said that it took nearly six months to make the belt.
When I looked in the box, I thought that the belt would look good with my armor. There was also a small tube on the left waist that could hold Sakuya.
I immediately put the belt on, stood in front of the mirror, and thought that it really looked good with the armor.
It was made from the Fafnir’s skin so it was undoubtedly sturdy.
When I talked about the belt, the three people showed expressions of understanding.

“I see, it is as you say.” [Conrad]

Conrad said while nodding.

“Even so, how did you carry the sword with the armor before?” [Conrad]

The other two also gave a questioning look.
Certainly, it was unusual for the sword to just hang there like it had done before.

“Oh~, how to explain. It sort of just always came with me?” [Chie]

“Huh?” [Alice, Conrad, Claude]

Three people asked in unison, with complex expressions.
It wasn’t unreasonable.

“As I said before, Sakuya is a weapon made exclusively for me, so it will always stick to me, whether I wear the armor or not.” [Chie]

The three people listened with deadpan expressions.
Even without the armor, Sakuya would stick to me.
I only recently started to understand it, but this sword had a will.
Although we were not able to communicate, I could feel a holy presence from the sword.
Its feelings were transmitted to the point that I could feel that Sakuya also liked the belt.

“In other words, it’s a magic sword, in case you were worried that it was a cursed sword.” [Chie]

“…Is that so?” [Conrad]

I said in response to Conrad’s bitter expression, which changed to relief.
Even I thought that it looked like a black, cursed sword.
Still, it was made by a God and unmistakably gave off the aura of a holy sword.
It looked intense from a first glance, though.

“That being said, regardless of the weak spot, it’s still a magic sword that was able to cut through the cursed dragon Fafnir. Even with advanced swordplay, such a feat is usually impossible.” [Conrad]

Ugh, Conrad’s sharp.
Indeed, only a holy or demonic sword was capable of cutting through a dragon, even with the weak spot.

“Well, I can guarantee that it’s not an evil sword! Anyways, about the martial arts tournament! It’s only a month away!” [Chie]

In an attempt to change the topic, I brought up the topic of the tournament that would take place in the Empire a month from now.

“Come to think of it, have this year’s participants been decided?” [Claude]

“No, the representative selection is one week from now.” [Conrad]

Conrad replied to Claude.
The topic of conversation was successfully changed.
The Martial Arts Tournament was held once every four years between the three countries, similar to the Olympic Games on Earth.
This year, the tournament was being held in the capital of the Empire.
The arena was located within the castle grounds and the general public would be allowed to enter during the tournament.
Obviously, there would be a need to strengthen security within the castle and in the surrounding town, so the Commander and Vice-Commander would be extremely busy.
The shopping stalls were going to put on a little show so, in truth, it might actually be a little fun.

I heard that four years ago, when it was held in the Holy Kingdom, Conrad won the contest.
That was the reason that Conrad was allowed to wear a cloak.
Before the tournament was established, the three countries had a 500 year long history of war, but the fighting stopped after the tournament was established.
Now, the armies mainly did demon-extermination or resolved criminal cases and such. To make it easier to understand, it was sort of like they were police.
Each army had a Commander and Vice-Commander, which was further broken down into groups with Captains.
A Captain was usually put in charge of a group of 30 soldiers.
During a mission, the Commander or Vice-Commander selects one group that best fit the needs of the mission and assigns them the task.
On rare occasions, the Commander or Vice-Commander would participate in the mission, but it was usually unnecessary.

"Nonetheless, the Commander will be chosen." [Conrad]

"Eh? Me?" [Chie]

I was surprised at hearing myself be called so suddenly.
Regrettably, I did not hear the contents of the conversation.

"Yeah, since you have the ability to kill a dragon. If the representative is to be the 'strongest', then it could only be the Commander." [Conrad]

Conrad said with a refreshing smile.
It used to annoy me when Yuusuke did it, but it's somehow different now.
Is it the charm of an older man?

"As the previous champion, I automatically qualify. I look forward to my fight with the Commander." [Conrad]

Conrad seems to have become excited.
Representative selection was between the Commander, the Vice-Commander, and the Captains.
It was a one on one knock-out fight, and whoever remained standing at the end was the winner.
The week after the representative selection, the winner was promoted to Commander and the second place to Vice-Commander. The Captains were

selected last.
Such was this world's meritocracy.
That was how the representative of the country, the Commander who survived the knock-out rounds, was determined.
It was simple, but also troublesome.
However, since I'm the Commander, it will be impossible to not participate.
It might be troublesome, but I have no intention of losing.

"Yeah, I also wanted to try fighting Conrad seriously one time. It's a good opportunity to get excited about!" [Chie]

I said while laughing.

"In moderation, Chie. When you get serious, it gets dangerous." [Claude]

Claude, how rude.
Well, I won't deny it.
However, a Martial Arts Tournament.
I wonder what kind of people the representatives of the other countries are.
I had a strong interest in the representatives of the other countries.
Participating in the tournament would probably lead to a lot of chances to learn about many things.
I was now looking forward to the fun that would be had in the tournament selection one week from now.

At this time, even I would not have expected the major incidents that would occur at this year's tournament.

Chapter 19

Chapter 19 – Qualifying Day 1, Knight Corps (Part 1)

– Arena (Luke, Squad Captain POV)

Six Captains, now including myself, and five Vice-Captains stood within the arena. Behind us, 180 soldiers from all of the different corps were arranged on the arena grounds.
The auditorium was filled with the nobles and citizens of the Empire.
The Imperial Family was sitting in the ceremonial seats in front of us.

“Henceforth! The martial arts tournament of the three countries shall begin!”
[???]

—-Waaaaaaa!

The green-haired Prime Minister, who was standing in between us and the Emperor, raised his voice while the audience cheered in unison.
The stage was set for the fight to determine the representative of the country four days from now.

– Player Waiting Room

I was currently in the waiting room given to the Knight Corps members, along with about 30 other people, waiting for my match.
Today’s scheduled matches would determine the representatives of the Knight Corps and the Swordsmen Corps.
At any rate, the number of participants in the qualification round was much larger this year.
It would be unreasonable to have everyone fight in one day, so two teams would fight each day, and the representatives would be chosen from each team. On the last day, the chosen participants would fight to determine the representative of the country.
The order of the matches was chosen by lottery. As such, day one was the Knight

Corps and the Swordsmen Corps, day two was the Archer Corps and the Spear Corps, and day three was the Mage Corps and the Fighter Corps.
The matches between the Knight Corps were currently taking place, and the matches for the Swordsmen Corps were scheduled to happen afterwards.
The fights began at about 10:00 am and would last well into the night.
There was a festival taking place around the arena, so there were stalls selling food and drinks and it wasn't a problem to stay the whole day to watch.
I was selected early in the qualifying rounds, so I was quite pleased.
The sooner your round was over, the faster you could rest and observe the other corps.
Besides, speaking of all days…

"Knight Commander, Knight Squad Captain Luke. Your match is about to begin, please move to the entry gate." [???]

*****Conrad's POV*****

– Military Officials' Dedicated Seating

I was sitting in the authorized military seating section of the arena, together with Adolf, Celestia, Brandon, and Amy.
Alice was watching with some school friends, so she was sitting with the general audience.
Although I did not know where Claude was, he was undoubtedly watching from somewhere.

"Even though it happens every four years, it seems to be especially lively this time." [Adolf]

Adolf, who was sitting next to me, muttered.

"Certainly. Wouldn't you say that there are more people than the last time?" [Brandon]

Brandon said with his arms crossed.
Indeed, there was a much larger crowd than there was four years ago.

"Naturally! It's because the Black Knight is participating this year!" [Celestia]

Celestia said proudly.

Amy nodded as she voiced her agreement.

“Not surprising. The Black Knight is the hero of the Empire, the person who stood alone against and defeated a dragon. Everyone gathered to try to catch a glimpse of the hero.” [Adolf]

Adolf said, in a convinced tone.
Hearing those words filled me with a sense of pride.
Truly, that person was amazing.
In fact, there was never a moment when I was not amazed…

—-Waaaaaaaaa!

Suddenly, the crowd began cheering.
I looked up and, just as I expected, the contestants had entered the arena floor from the entrance.

“Oh! The Black Knight is following along.” [Brandon]

Brandon said when he saw the Commander.

“Eh? Is the Black Knight carrying a wooden sword? The shape seems to have changed to a…” [Adolf]

Adolf tilted his head to one side.
That wasn’t surprising.
The normal design of a wooden sword was a cross shape.
However, the Commander was carrying what looked like a long stick with a gentle curve.
When you looked at it closely, you could see that it was similar to Sakuya.

“It’s apparently referred to as a ‘bokken’. The Commander previously told me that the cross-shaped sword was difficult to use and proceeded to build a wooden sword specifically for this day.” [Conrad]

I gave a brief explanation.

“By himself? Not a woodworker?” [Adolf]

Adolf asked.

“He said something about the image not being transmitted well…” [Conrad]

I recalled when the Commander had told me about it while carving out the sword with wood working tools.

“I showed the craftsman Sakuya and explained what I wanted, but the overall image…I ended up deciding to build it on my own.” [Chie]

Was it because the explanation had not been clear enough? The Commander had worked on the sword with drooping shoulders, looking depressed.

“But, it looks kinda lumpy.” [Brandon]

Brandon muttered while looking at the wooden sword.

“Brandon, do not say that to the Commander. The person himself seemed quite sensitive about it.” [Conrad]

I remembered a figure that breathed a heavy sigh upon the completion of the wooden sword.

“About that? What kind of guy would have the personality to care about such small details?” [Adolf]

—-Beshi~tsu

As I was listening to Adolf, he was suddenly hit.

“What are you…” [Adolf]

Adolf sent a sharp gaze toward Celestia while rubbing the back of his head.

“Maybe he has a sensitive side to him.” [Celestia]

Nevertheless, the Commander, who usually said things like “it’s normal”, became so delicate that I had started to worry.
Besides, with the various things that had happened in the last six months, on top of coming to an unfamiliar place, it seemed like an odd thing to be so worried about.
However, Alice…

“Even if you hide the gender, she is still a woman.” [Alice]

…said that with a smile on her face.
Apparently, it was difficult for a man to understand such things.
When I told her that I didn’t understand…

"…You just don't understand a woman's heart, brother." [Alice]

…She told me with half-closed eyes.
What did that mean?

"(giggle)" [Amy & Celestia]

For some reason, Amy and Celestia were laughing.

"It…is…cute." [Amy]

"Truly." [Celestia]

"What?" [Three Clueless Men]

We tilted our heads to the side, confused about what the two women were talking about.

*****Claude's POV*****

-General Audience Area

"It's the Black Knight." [???]

"Ah, finally." [???]

I was watching the matches with Alice and three of her school friends.
I didn't have work today, so I was wearing plain clothes.
I was wearing cream-colored pants with black leather boots, as well as a dark brown jacket over a black shirt.
When Chie saw my clothes before I left…

"You, your casual clothes are rather plain." [Chie]

…is what she said.
Even I had normal looking clothes.
Everyone had at least one pair of ordinary clothes…is what I would like to say, but Chie has never gone out in normal clothes.
Apparently, she wanted to hide her identity; her hair and eye color in particular.
Though, even I had no idea where she came from.
I hadn't even heard of any rumors about people with that kind of hair and eye color.

Was she from a group of people that lived in hiding somewhere or something?

“Claude? Is something wrong?” [Alice]

Alice spoke to me as I was engrossed in my thoughts.
Useless, useless. It was a rare chance to be with Alice outside of work. Thinking about these things was unnecessary.
Generally, it was unnecessary to dig any deeper into Chie’s background.

“Uh, no. It’s nothing.” [Claude]

“Hm? Is that so?” [Alice]

I gave a slight laugh in response.

“It’s just that his opponent is poor. The battle will be over in the blink of an eye.” [Claude]

I purposely diverted the topic.
Well, those were my sincere feelings though.

“Certainly. Even a Squad Captain wouldn’t be able to reach the feet of Black Knight-sama.” [Alice]

Alice said without hesitation.
Really, Alice always thought about her master first.
To be honest, I envied Chie.

“Oh~…” [???]

In response to our conversation, one of Alice’s friends, who had short, blue hair and glasses, let out a voice.
Alice was wearing her maid uniform, while the other three were wearing their servant school uniforms: a white, one-piece apron over a brown servant dress.
They were wearing clothes meant for a normal student servant, unlike Alice, who was employed.
Alice was wearing a black dress with a white frilly apron. It was easy to tell that Alice had better quality clothes than the other girls.
It was certainly a lovely appearance.
Well, aside from that.

“Eh? What is it, Ashe?” [Alice]

Apparently, the girl with short, blue hair was called Ashe.
Even though we greeted each other a little while ago, she had not introduced herself.

“I was worried about it until a moment ago, but it seems like your acquaintance here and the Black Knight have a close relationship? Forgive me, but you don’t appear to be a noble and don’t seem to be a part of the military either?” [Ashe]

The other two nodded, agreeing with Ashe.

“That’s right! You and Alice seem pretty close!” [???]

“How to say it? It’s like you received enough of an education but, at the same time, are still missing something?” [???]

The girl with long green hair wrapped in a bun behind her head spoke first, and the girl with a black headband on her red, shoulder length hair followed up.
These two people carried an intense aura.
Honestly, I was weak to this type.
I liked elegant women, like Alice.
Though, sometimes she scares me…

“Alice, this girl…uh…classmate…uh, friend is?” [Claude]

I somehow managed to ask.
However, the girl with the headband and red hair…

“What ‘this girl’! Is that any way to address a lady?!” [???]

She said sharply, with a red face.
As I thought, intense.

“Okay, okay, calm down, Karen. Claude, this girl is Karen, a classmate and friend from the servant school.” [Alice]

As Alice introduced her friend Karen and tried to calm her down…I gave a slightly cramped smile.

“Then, the girl with blue hair is Ashe, and the one with green hair is Lorna. They are also classmates and friends.” [Alice]

“Nice to meet you. Call me Ashe.” [Ashe]

“Lorna.” [Lorna]

I had one thought as the three were introduced.
Their personalities were completely different.
Ashe gave off a quiet atmosphere, and as a friend of Alice, that was understandable.
However, the other two gave off a very intense atmosphere, so the fact that they were friends with Alice was hard to imagine.
Lorna seemed to have a bit of a haughty attitude, while Karen was the type who would immediately go ballistic.
It was definitely a strange combination.

“Ladies, this is Claude. He’s a friend who I became acquainted with through my relationship with the Black Knight.” [Alice]

Alice introduced me to the other girls.
Well, she didn’t actually lie.
It was a fact that Chie and I are friends.
I also did meet Conrad and Alice through Chie.

“Please, your friend? This barbaric person?” [Karen]

Karen made a bitter expression while pointing her finger.
This rude woman.
The other two girls were surprised and opened their eyes widely.

“Hmph…sorry for being so uncivilized.” [Claude]

I retorted with a slight glare.
I expected this type of reaction, but it still didn’t sit well with me.

“Uh, Alice? No matter how you explain it to us, you are joking, right?” [Lorna]

Lorna asked Alice while trembling.
Now there’s two rude women!

“Hey, both of you…” [Ashe]

Ashe was trying to suppress the two.
Now, this girl seemed sensible.

“No matter what, it’s not a joke.” [Alice]

Alice told them with a smile on her face.
The tension in the air between two strong women was unreal!
Ordinary women would be completely intimidated.

“Rather than that, could you quiet down? I would like to focus on the match.” [Claude]

I dropped the tone of my voice as I spoke to Karen and Lorna.
The three girls besides Alice gave me a blank look for a few moments.
Although they seemed to want to retort, they also appeared to be interested in Chie’s upcoming match.
We all turned our attention towards Chie, who was in the arena.
She was currently standing in the center of the arena, lightly shaking the wooden sword while waiting for the match to start.
To be frank, I already knew how the tournament would end.
I could confidently say that Chie would be the representative.
For that reason, I hadn’t really come here to cheer, but to watch her fight.
Only Chie and I knew that we had once tried to kill each other.
We had become friends after we trained together.
Well, we didn’t do that as much recently.
For Chie, I wasn’t her only training partner.
Since Chie began serving as a training officer, the amount of time that we trained together has fallen.

Of course, it was also hard to get Conrad to train with me, since he trained the other soldiers as well.

Well, another reason was that I was the “Imperial Army Covert Investigator”, and the only people who knew of my attachment to the military were His Majesty, Conrad, Alice, and Chie.

I couldn’t participate in general training, so my training partners had all but disappeared.

Since that’s the case, I’ll use what I’m best at: observation.

However, I’ve never seen Chie in a one-on-one battle.

One of the several covert missions that Chie and I set out on was a long-term mission to suppress thieves.

At the time, it was believed by the general public that Chie had gone to subjugate some demons.

It was a thief suppression mission, so the battles naturally revolved around multiple opponents, and I was unable to witness a 1-on-1 fight.

Therefore, the tournament this time was a precious thing that I would witness, no matter what.

Sometimes, it frustrated me to know that I would never be able to win against her.

I mean, nobody had ever seen her get serious.

In other words, even though we had seen her fight before, her real power was unknown.

In the case of the thief subjugation as well, the only reason we were able to succeed was because of Chie.

It’s not funny!

Just how amazing can she be!

She wouldn’t mind this kind of thing, but I wanted to at least be comparable.

I remembered her figure that seemed to be crushed by anxiety when it had been time for her first mission.

On seeing such an appearance, I had called out to her.

However, she returned to her usual self shortly after.

After seeing such a thing, I finally understood.

She was just a normal person.

Everyone who lived in this city knew of her greatness, but it was different from the things that I knew.

Sure, Conrad and Alice could take pride in having known Chie ever since she first came to the Capital.

However, that made me want to become closer to her.

I wanted to reach the point where we could entrust each other with our backs.

Conrad might have had similar thoughts, but he was only thinking as a subordinate.

The feelings were similar, but different.

That was my goal now.

For a person who used the word ‘friend’ to describe a helpless assassin, it was only natural for a ‘true friend’ to return the favor.

*****Chie’s POV*****

At the moment, I was standing on the arena grounds with a wooden sword, facing my opponent.

My opponent was Luke, a Squad Captain who had thick, dark gold hair and was about 180 Kuameito tall.

He wasn’t an ikemen, but had a manly face with cool features.

He was equipped with chain mail, instead of plate armor and a helmet.

His wooden sword had the shape of a cross.

The use of real blades in the tournament was prohibited to prevent death.

Mages were provided with a bracelet that acted as a type of magic limiter.

Well, it was a festival meant for fun, not for killing people.

I quickly made a wooden sword for this day.

However, because of my lack of knowledge in woodworking, the finished product left much to be desired…

“Commander! Best regards!” [Luke]

As I gently swayed the wooden sword, dissatisfied, Luke bowed his head in a manner that clearly showed that he was nervous.

Hey, hey, even though it’s just a match, are you going to be okay?

“Hey, hey, if you’re so nervous before the actual match, you won’t be able to fight properly, you know?” [Chie]

I tried to encourage him to relax but…

“M-My apologies! Commander!” [Luke]

……

It was useless. He was completely tensed up.

It can’t be helped. Truthfully, I wanted a normal match, but looks like I’ll have to change my plans.

Sometimes, it was necessary for the Squad Captain to take the field on behalf of the Commander or Vice-Commander.

Well, the more dangerous missions were lead by the Commander or Vice-Commander, but for small punitive missions like goblin suppression, the Squad Captains usually served as a lead.

Even then, no matter how earnest the person was, the tension and anxiety to complete their duties and make precise decisions could take a toll.

Well, this young man had only recently become a Squad Captain.

His skill with the sword was considerable, but if there was something that I could criticize, it was that he lacked the experience to lead people.

For that, he only needed the experience!

Therefore, my priority was to not make my opponent become too tense.

“Then, both contestants! Take your positions!” [Referee]

In response to the referee uncle, Luke readied his sword.

He held the sword in his right hand and lowered his posture.

He held the long sword with one hand because we had many mounted knights who often used a weapon with one hand.

Mounted knights held the reins with one hand and the sword with the other.

Knights could also use lances, but most used a sword.

As I thought about such things, I clasped my sword tightly.

I held the sword with both hands, holding it to the lower right and behind me. If someone looked at me from the front, it would seem as if I was empty-handed.

“Uh, that…” [Referee]

The referee let out a voice while noticeably perplexed.

“On your command.” [Chie]

I said to the referee.

To Luke, who was also perplexed, I said,

“Luke, on the command, give it everything you have.” [Chie]

“Eh? Ah, but…” [Squad Captain]

Luke was more and more puzzled by my words.

“It’s fine…come at me…with everything you have.” [Chie]

Towards the end of my statement, I dropped the tone of my voice.

When he perceived that, his confused face suddenly tightened.

He seemed to have switched to being combat-ready.

Good. Just like that.

“…Then…Begin!!” [Referee]

The referee gave the command.

Just as I told him to, Luke kicked off the ground and charged at me.

He attacked while brandishing the sword from above.

For a normal person in the military or a guild, it would look like a movement that was too fast to avoid.

However, I avoided it by pulling back.

Maybe it was within his expectations. Luke immediately threw out attacks one after another.

Attacks converged on me over and over from all sides.

I dodged each one.

What’s this, he can fight perfectly fine after all.

With this, it’s alright.

“Well, about time to finish this.” [Chie]

“!?” [Luke]

After saying that, I created a little distance with a strong jump backwards.

I opened the distance between Luke and me in an instant, while fending off an attack, which left Luke surprised.

“Hey, hey, standing around surprised like that, you’re leaving yourself open!” [Chie]

“!? Damn it!” [Luke]

It was useless once an opening had been made. I quickly stepped to the front.

And…

“…From below.” [Chie]

“…I am defeated.” [Luke]

Luke let out a voice of defeat as the tip of my sword stopped right before his throat.

“T-The winner! Black Knight!” [Referee]

——Waaaaaa!

The referee announced the winner without managing to hide his surprise and amazement.

The audience gave an enormous cheer.

I removed the wooden sword…

“Thank you very much.” [Chie]

…and lightly bowed to Luke.

“Ah, thank you very much!” [Luke]

Luke also took a deep bow, attempting to mimic me.

While my bow was about 45 degrees, Luke easily lowered his head to about 90 degrees.

In Japan, you only lowered your head 90 degrees for an apology, but since this wasn’t Japan, I decided not to mind it.

The meaning behind how much one lowered their head was a cultural difference that was unknown to this country.

“It is best to react with good judgement and in a calm manner.” [Chie]

“! Yes!!” [Luke]

Luke gave me a reply as I walked away, in order to leave the arena grounds.

Though no one could see because of the helmet, I heard him as I was leaving the grounds, and a smile spread across my face.

The training with Claude was totally worth it!

After I received this body from Amaterasu, my opponent’s movement always looked slow. However, even if my physical abilities were improved, it didn’t mean that complex and precise movement was possible.

Just because a human’s stamina and strength are great didn’t mean that they could do anything.

After secretly observing someone for a time, you could eventually read the signs and predict what actions and movement they might take.

It was originally a skill I got from Earth, where I observed the other person to find the precise opportunity to escape.

I never thought that the tactics I had used to avoid Yuusuke would be useful in a place like this.

When I was only recalling battles from manga, anime, and games, I could only mimic the form.

With the help of missions and the training with Claude, I was able to incorporate everything in a battle and finished a decent style.

In fact, while I was attempting to train based on my own knowledge of how to fight one evening, I was approached by Claude.

Since it was offered and it was a good chance, I immediately accepted.

Honestly, I could have trained with the soldiers, but then I would have wanted to hold back.

It wasn’t like I was looking down on the other soldiers or anything.

My previous fight with Claude led me to understand the level of the soldiers in the military, so I became insecure.

However, I would never say that they were weak.

The difference in strength between Captains and Vice-Captains was still quite large, but most of the soldiers were at a more normal skill level.

Even when compared with Claude, the difference was clear.

You could say that Claude was at the level of a Captain.

No, maybe not yet.

Though he was inferior to Conrad, he could get a draw with a Captain if he was lucky.

It was because we fought each other one-on-one that I knew such things.

Therefore, I was comfortable with training together with him.

After training with him for so long, I began to understand his style better.

His best weapon was that he was fast and light.

He used acrobatic moves, and his speed sometimes made you lose sight of his movements.

For training, Claude used a wooden cross-shaped sword and I used Sakuya's sheath for training instead of real weapons.

Incidentally, I put a barrier around us that made us invisible to people outside, since I trained in normal clothes.

After all, if I always relied on the defense of my armor, the training would have no meaning.

Therefore, even if it was just a wooden sword, if it was aimed at a vital point, I would still feel fear.

So, I studied.

It was a fight against an experienced human.

Claude might have been confident, but I always won the battle, even though I was also always desperate.

He was always frustrated, but it was vexing for me too.

I am always being helped by him. He was strong both mentally and physically.

Conrad and Alice also supported me greatly, but in the end, the relationship was still master and subordinate, and as such, I was the one they relied on.

If Claude had not stayed, it wouldn't be wrong to say that I would have been crushed by my position.

The only person whom I could rely on as a 'friend' was Claude.

Therefore, I want to be comparable to him.

As for the current me, even though it was a fake strength, I wanted to reach a point where I was able to support him.

For now, my goal was to become an existence who, for the first time, would be called a 'best friend'.

As I returned to the waiting room, I clenched my sword even more tightly than before.

Chapter 20

Xant: This was tl'd by Elephant No.5. Big thanks =3=

Chapter 20 – Qualifying Day 1, Knight Corps (Part 2)

General Audience Area (Claude POV)

As Chie went towards the exit, I thought:
She wasn't being serious at all!

"That is the strength of a knight who slew a dragon…"

"Amazing…"

"No doubt, that is the knight who was chosen by the black unicorn."

"……"

Karen, Ashe, and Lorna murmured with surprise beside me.
Since Alice was dissatisfied with their earlier comments, she didn't say anything.
It was natural, since they spoke as if they understood that strength, when they didn't understand at all.

"Black Knight-sama was not serious at all. Claude-san?"

Alice brought it up with me.
She faced me, seeking my agreement.
It seemed that Alice was angry at the three because their words reflected only that level of understanding.
As I was of the same opinion, I replied to Alice's question.

"Indeed. He was clearly holding back."

Alice looked happy with my words, contentedly smiling and nodding.
She's so cute…

"Oh, that wasn't being serious?"

When Alice and I turned to look at the three after hearing Lorna's statement,

they were looking at us with shock.
It was natural for them to be surprised, since they had found out that that person was not being serious, which they had previously believed.
However, for their sakes, teaching them the truth immediately would definitely be good in the long run.
Even though I trained every night with that person, there were so many surprising things that my head was constantly filled with panic.
In the recent match, the opponent's sword skills were decent, and the speed of the sword was also considerably high, enough for me to believe that it would normally be hard to avoid (though I could dodge it with room to spare), but Chie easily and quickly dodged it with minimal movements.
In the eyes of an amateur, it might be understandable to think that that was her true strength.

However, that was before.

"Isn't it natural? In the first place, the difference in strength between Fafnir and the Imperial Squad Captain is already large, so of course he would be overwhelmed by that guy's power."

That's right. If one thought about it carefully, that person would not need to put in any effort against an ordinary person.
She was totally going easy today, wasn't she?

"""……"""

When they heard my words, they became speechless.
Alice looked at them with a smug smile, then returned to watching the other squad captains' fights.

Military Officials' Dedicated Seating (Conrad POV)

"I understand, but still…"

"He didn't even show the 's' in serious, that Black Knight…"
(TL: Originally a play on the Japanese word for serious. 本気の『ほ』)

Brandon and Adolf murmured beside me.

"Of course! Against a squad captain, the Black Knight wouldn't need to put in

an ounce of effort!”

Celestia proudly declared.
Amy and I agreed with those words.
It would be unthinkable for the Commander, who felled the Cursed Dragon Fafnir in one blow, to get serious against a squad captain.

“With that, there won’t be any more noteworthy matches, will there?”

Adolf spoke in a disappointed tone.
At those words, a ‘Kachin’ sound was heard.

“Hey, Adolf. You, are you looking down on me and the commander’s knight corps?”

‘Girii’
I glared at Adolf and spoke with a threatening voice
Since it was important, I emphasized ‘Commander’.

“Scary! That’s not it! I just meant that the Black Knight’s true strength was seldom seen, so I was looking forward to it, and since I didn’t get to see it, I was disappointed! It’s not like I was saying that the Knight Order was weak or anything! How much do you care about the Black Knight?!”

Adolf raised his voice while denying it.
How much did I care about the Black Knight?

“Always, without fail.”

I declared with a serious expression.
For some reason, Adolf and Brandon’s faces cramped, and they continued to be inattentive to their subordinate’s matches.
Un, due to the Commander’s guidance, all of their attacks were well performed.

“However, it certainly is disappointing to be unable to see Black Knight-dono’s true strength.”

“I…I wanted…to see it.”

Celestia and Amy spoke with disappointment.
For them to earnestly admire the Commander so, I thought it was a little cute.
However, it was too early to be disappointed.

“What are you saying? If the Commander keeps on advancing like this, he will face Kyle in the finals. If it’s him, wouldn’t we see a different match from the ones against the other squad captains?”

At those words, the four of them looked towards me.

“Ah! Certainly, if it’s him, we might see a different match.”

Adolf assented.

“Indeed! If that person’s true strength…”

Celestia, with both arms crossed, also interjected.
Even Brandon and Amy nodded in agreement.
Since we knew Kyle’s true strength, I understood.
We watched the matches of the Knight Order while looking forward to the finals.
The match between the Commander and his Excellency the Imperial Prime Minister Reiz Strauss’s son, the former Knight Order’s Vice-Commander Kyle Strauss.

– After a while, the finals, in the arena

————Waaaaaaaaa!

After advancing smoothly from the first round, it was now the finals of the Knight Corps Tournament.
My opponent was the former Knight Order’s Vice-Commander, now Squad Captain Kyle Strauss.
I met him on my first day in this world, and he was one of the few people who knew my appearance and gender. He was a green-haired knight-san.

“Commander, please treat me well.”

Unlike the other squad captains, he bowed calmly.
As a Japanese person, upon seeing a 45 degree bow, I thought that it was very polite.

“Here as well, please treat me well.”

While saying this, I returned the bow fully.
That was basic etiquette.

After straightening up, I looked at Green-haired Knight-san…Kyle.

He had a calm expression, a well-featured nose and mouth, and a smiling face.
He was like an ikemen-san.
I felt like this image was common in the western style world.
He wore a suit of plate armor painted the same shade of green as his hair.
His hair was cut short and even, and he seemed to be about 180 kuameito tall.
Due to his true ability being that of a former vice-commander, he stood out in comparison to the other squad captains.

Moreover, in the imperial family's dedicated seating, the whole imperial family was watching while seated side-by-side, but to the left, His Excellency the Prime Minister Reiz Strauss was glaring at me! Scary!
It would soon be half a year since I had joined, but I was still hated by the Prime Minister.
Our first impression was certainly poor, but other than that, I don't remember doing anything to make him hate me?

"Haah…~"

I sighed.

"?……Ah."

Puzzled at my sigh, Kyle looked in the direction I had been looking just now.
He seemed to understand the reason why I sighed.

"…I'm very sorry about my father."

Kyle apologized.
The father and son have such different dispositions.

"I, what did I do to His Excellency?"

"Well, Father is only being stubborn."

While telling me not to worry about it, Kyle apologized again.
This father and son weren't similar on the inside at all.
If you looked at their outward appearances, the father, the Prime Minister, showed a stubborn and harsh disposition, while the son exuded a calm disposition.
Kyle was surely more similar to his mother.

“Well then, both participants, get ready!”

While I was still deep in thought, the referee told us to get ready.
Come on, I must focus on the match.
When Kyle and I were about five meters apart, I took a midsection stance, while Kyle held the wooden sword in one hand with a natural stance.
I took a deep breath, then calmed my heart as I exhaled.

“Now then…Start!”

————’Dan’!

As soon as the signal was given, I leapt forward.
Although I had planned to make a light step, I instantly ended up right beside Kyle.

“!? Guh!”

Kyle reacted late, but he still almost blocked my bokuto’s downward swing with his wooden sword.
Un, his reaction really was faster than that of the other squad captains.
Either way though, I thought that it couldn’t be helped that he moved late.
As I exerted a strength substantially stronger than I had against the other squad captains, Kyle retaliated.
To be honest, for the matches up until now, rather than a match, they should be called spars.
In the previous matches against the squad captains, I had given advice like usual.
That’s why, at least when facing Kyle in the finals, I decided to have a match, not a spar.

————Ga! Gan!

It may have been because I was concentrating on the match, but the sounds of the bokuto and the wooden sword clashing didn’t enter my ears.
At times, Kyle undauntedly counterattacked and warded off my bokuto.
While recalling an image from a showdown in a period drama, I wielded the bokuto and mimicked it.
This continued for five minutes.

“Gu! Ha!”

“……”

I forced Kyle, who was driving in and stabbing with the wooden sword in one hand, back.
I planned to silently dodge to the right.
It was no good.
Although I had the strength, if I dodged the stab, a gap would emerge.
I raised the bokuto from below.

————Kan!

“!? Damn!”

Kyle’s wooden sword went flying into the sky with a loud sound, and while he was surprised, I kicked the ground, moving towards him with the bokuto in my right hand.
The point of the bokuto, which was in my right hand, faced left, instantly crossing the surprised Kyle, who couldn’t avoid it. Its edge struck him in the abdomen. With just a little strength, Kyle was blown away.
He landed ten meters away and slid for five more meters.

————Karan！

As I held my lowered stance, with the bokuto in my right hand held straight out, I heard Kyle’s sword fall to the ground.
My surroundings were quiet for some reason.

“…Ha! Winner, Black Knight!! The winner of the Knight Corps Tournament is the Black Knight!”

————Haaaaaa!

Since it was silent, didn’t that mean that nobody was cheering?
Why was everybody silent?
It was so noisy before the finals started.
I let go of the bokuto and rushed over to the now face-up Kyle.

“Kyle, are you alright?”

“Ye-yes…Guh…”

Kyle groaned as he got up while holding his stomach.

I understood why, since his armor was dented.
Oops~, even though I had only put a little bit of strength into the bokuto.

Since all of the match participants wore armor, wasn't it bad that the magician had cast reinforcement magic that prevented the weapons from breaking?
Even then, Magician, what type of reinforcement magic was cast for even the armor to be dented?

"Sorry, I went too far."

I apologized while reaching down.

"Nah, thank you for the instruction."

Kyle said while grabbing my hand to help himself up.
Despite the pain that he should be feeling in his stomach, Kyle showed a refreshing countenance.
It seemed that his condition wasn't a problem.

"Commander! Please become the representative!"

"Okay!"

After responding to Kyle's support, we both left the arena grounds.
It was now 15:00.
The swordsman corps' tournament would begin after an hour-long break.

Fuu~, I'm hungry!
Since I had fought consecutive matches, I had not eaten lunch yet.
I had no more plans after this, so I decided to buy lunch at the stall.
It would be troublesome if it was too late, after all.
I hurried through the halls, towards the stalls in the plaza outside the tournament grounds.

Still, who was the magician who cast the reinforcement magic?

Military Officers' Dedicated Seating

"…It was dented."

"It was dented, huh."

“It was actually dented.”

“It is true that it was dented…”

“That…was…too much…”

Adolf, Brandon, Celestia, and I spoke one by one while looking at Amy, who had reinforced the weapons used in the match.
Amy reflected in shame.

In the recent match, Kyle’s armor had been dented by the bokuto.
It was just an ordinary piece of wood that the Commander had sharpened.
It wouldn’t have been funny even if it had caused a small dent, but the reinforcement magic dented the armor like the bokuto was a bludgeon.
Even if it had been a woman like Celestia who attacked seriously, the armor would still have been dented like it had with the Commander. That was how strong the reinforcement magic was.
Our faces cramped up.
Even though the Commander was certainly strong, when compared with the reinforcement magic on the swords during the tournament four years ago, this year’s reinforcement was abnormal.

“Even too much has its limits! Just being hit by an ordinary wooden sword hurts, so isn’t that a lethal weapon!?”

Adolf scolded Amy while dripping with cold sweat.

I understood the feeling.
That reinforcement must have been for wooden weapons like bludgeoning weapons and arrows, rather than wooden swords.

“That isn’t ‘reinforcement’, but ‘misfortune’ instead…”
(TL: Pun based on the pronunciation of “reinforcement” and “misfortune”.『補強』vs『凶化』)

Celestia spoke with a cramped smile while breaking out in a cold sweat.
The word felt wrong, but the meaning behind it wasn’t.
If this had happened in the other matches before we noticed, injuries or even deaths may have occurred.
It was truly good that we discovered this now.

“Tell the Commander the circumstances afterwards. Then cast all of the

reinforcement magic again.”

“…Yes…”

Amy was dejected at my words.
To her, who revered the Commander so, it was a disgraceful mistake.
I felt sorry, but this time, it was inevitable.

“Well then, there will be no problems for the matches from tomorrow onward.
However, the matches of the swordsman corps today…there is no time.”

Brandon’s face was stiff as he said this.
Certainly, those guys from the swordsman corps had to compete now.
Poor swordsman corps.
Well, my corps had no problems until the finals!
It’ll be fine!

……

Don’t die.

General Seating Area (Alice POV)

“““……”””

Dumbfounded expressions were stuck on the faces of the three people beside me.
Claude-san went to buy food and wasn’t here right now.
He had asked me to save two seats.
Fufu, so that was it.
I understood who the other seat was for.
They truly were close friends.

Still, these three people…How long were they going to show those immodest faces?
Becoming a full-fledged maid was still a long way away.

“Hey, even though you are all classmates, maids shouldn’t show that kind of face!”

“““!?”””

The three of them finally came to their senses.
Well, well. I could tell that it would be hard for them.

“Good grief, even though Claude-san told you to be prepared beforehand.”

I said with amazement.

“No way! I knew that it would be abnormally fast, but that was so amazing that I can’t think straight!”

Karen protested.

I understood that they were this confused because they had not learned martial arts from Head Maid-sama and Head Butler-sama.
A servant must always be calm.
At every moment, they had to be able to carry out tasks for the master, as a support.
Even on a battlefield!
That was the mission of us castle servants!
That´s what I was taught when it was decided that I would work in the castle.

Though it was technically unnecessary for one to attend the servant school, according to the Head Maid-sama, it was recommended for one to attend and graduate.
Thanks to my friends, I was able to do many things.
However, I had always thought this.
If the butlers had a martial arts course, then the maids should also have one!
I, who had served in the castle since I was 12 years old, was also taught martial arts.
Compared to this, other aristocratic graduates of the servant school immediately served in estates without studying martial arts.
In that condition, could they support their master?

We servants were manual laborers.
I often saw the dirty sides of the nobles.
Some seemed to be mentally unstable.
For all those reasons, martial arts was indispensable!
Even Black Knight-sama has said that by training one’s body, one strengthens their mind.

I completely agreed.
That was the difference between these three and me right now.

“A maid aims to always be calm! That’s why I recommended that you study martial arts, but since you all said ‘I don’t want to,’ you are now confused like this! That is proof that your minds are lax!”

It was a good chance to advise them.
By no means was it because I disliked them.
As a good friend, I had to advise them when they were wrong.

“It’s not too late. Learn martial arts and temper your mind. It will be a step towards becoming a full-fledged maid.”

“…Could it be that all of the servants in the castle know martial arts?”

Ashe asked nervously.

“Of course. We who work in the castle must be able to deal with anything anytime, so of course we know martial arts.”

Since we never know what will happen in these times.

“E-even the duties of normal soldiers?”

Rona asked with a cramped face.

Was learning martial arts so disagreeable?
However, it wasn’t like that!

“The ones closer than the soldiers are us servants! When an assassin or demon attacks, it is obviously the duty of the closest people to deal with it!”

In fact, the imperial family could be targeted.
At that time, we servants would struggle to protect the royals.
One may have to fight against a group of assassins.

“It is not that I hate you three. Rather, it is because you are my beloved friends that I say this. It does not have to be now, but take your time and think about it.”

“““…”””

The three of them fell completely silent.

It was slightly harsh, but there was no other way to put it.
Previously, when I used calm words, they had not understood it.

“Well then, that’s it for the lecture. Since Claude-san should almost be back with delicious things for us, let’s enjoy the swordsman corps matches.”

I said this with my usual smile.
As a servant, a smile was also an indispensable part of the job.

“…Now that I think about it, it has been a while.”

Karen looked around as she said that.
Although it had been a while, I hadn’t noticed it.

“The other person, the friend of Claude-san who was supposed to come…it seems that he hasn’t arrived yet.”

It had been 40 minutes since the matches of the Knight Corps ended, but that person had not shown up.
Since she said that she had a break after this, she was certain to come.

“Eh? Another person will come?”

“Is it one of Alice’s acquaintances?”

Lorna and Ashe asked.

“Well, I know that amazing person well.”

I answered with a smile.
Somehow, that voice seemed to bounce.

“Heeh, for you to go that far…”

Karen said with an interested expression.
It was an uneasy way of speaking, but I didn’t mind it.

————”Aren’t you being too lax?”

————”Hmm? I don’t think so… ”

Two familiar voices sounded.

“Ah, it seems that he has returned.”

“It seems that the first person is the barbarian.”

“And the other?”

Karen, Lorna, and Ashe spoke.

It seemed that they only recognized the first voice.
However, the second voice…
It can’t be!

“Excuse me!”

“Eh? Alice is fast!”

I heard Karen’s voice behind me, but I didn’t mind it!

It can’t be! It can’t be!

When I looked towards the entrance, I immediately spotted them.
The figure of one of the people was just as I had feared.

“Ah, Alice, why are you so flustered?”

Acting normal, as if it were nothing, the one who was in front of me…Black Knight-sama asked me a question.
That terrifying visage faced me with both hands full of food and drinks.

“Ah…aah…”

“Alice? What’s wrong? Are you alright?”

“…It’s probably because of your appearance.”

Since I couldn’t get the words out, Claude-san spoke for me.
Thank you very much, Claude-san!

Claude’s POV

Aah, what is this!
For my master to have to go buy food, I am disqualified as a servant!

Right now, in front of us, Alice had unusually lost her composure.
I was positive that it was due to the Black Knight beside me, Chie.
As a maid, Alice seemed to be regretting that her master Chie had bought food and brought it to her.

Chie herself had the status of a duke, but she had the upbringing of a commoner, an unusual noble.

According to Chie:

“Please excuse me from such absurdities, one way or another! These are the principles of the Saitou house!”

So she said.

Sometimes, Chie’s family from her stories seemed powerful, wild, or honestly absurd.
Chie sometimes looked into the distance too.
Possibly because of her family’s upbringing, Chie did not rely on anybody.
After understanding this, I didn’t think that Chie’s everyday actions were surprising, but Alice the maid and Conrad-san were different.
It seemed that it was inevitable that they wanted her to depend on them.
That was why Alice appeared so flustered right now, since her master had taken her job away from her instead of relying on her.

However, it couldn’t be helped.
When I originally met her, Chie had been planning to buy a meal.
Since we coincidentally met up, I bought meals for Alice and the others and walked back with Chie.
In the end, the two of us came back with five people’s meals, a cake, and drinks, which led to the current situation.
It wasn’t Alice’s fault.
Since it was a holiday, one shouldn’t need to work, but the Aiden siblings did not think like that.
I understood this in half a year.

“…Alice, since you have a rest day, it’s okay.”

Chie also seemed to understand why Alice was like this and tried to persuade her.

“Bu-but…Black Knight-sama…to help…”

She was so agitated that her voice shook.
As expected, only Chie could calm the Aiden siblings from this state.

“It’s fine. Alice is only 14 years old, not yet an adult, so for today, please let adults like Claude and I spoil you.”

Chie shrewdly included my name while urging her to act spoiled.

I felt happy when I understood that.
I’m sure that under her helmet, she is grinning!

“…Okay.”

While calming herself down, Alice reluctantly agreed.
As expected of Chie the tamer.

“Well then, since I’m hungry, I’ll take a seat. It is almost time for the start of the swordsman corps matches. We are keeping the other three waiting.”

“Ah, that’s right! Well, Black Knight-sama, I will take care of your belongings.”

Alice returned to her usual smile and tried to take the food from Chie.
Chie refused.

“Didn’t I already say so? Today, Alice can act spoiled and I will hold this. Depend on us, especially Claude!”

“You…”

I really enjoy this guy.

I was somewhat annoyed with Chie as we returned to our seats.
The three people who noticed that I had returned turned to me while showing faces of displeasure, but upon seeing Chie, their faces instantly froze with foolish expressions, as if cursed.

“Heeey, everyone?”

Even when Chie waved her hand, there was no response.
Since they weren’t cursed and it wasn’t a problem, we left those three alone and started to eat.
I sat between them and clapped my hands together.

“““Itadakimasu!”””

We said the greeting from Chie’s hometown and started eating.

The greeting was hard for me to pronounce at first, but I have been able to say

“Itadakimasu” recently.
I really liked these words.
I ate the steamed potato with my disposable fork.
Ah, all was well.

The Swordsman Corps Matches will begin in 10 minutes.

To be continued

Afterword

The 20th chapter has been published.
This time, I pretended that the joke item was completely serious. Did you enjoy it?
I think that I was able to show a rare, flustered Alice.
Since my coughing is better, I want to update a little quicker.
I will fix typos in the future.
Thank you for always reading.
Please enjoy this novel in the future.

T/N: Please don’t expect me to take up regular translations yet! We’ll see after my uni starts. Consider this a not-Christmas gift halfway through the year.
This project is not claimed, and is still up for grabs… Maybe it should become a project that random translators randomly donate chapters when they want to do something different… Considering the update rate of the raws, it is feasible… (Haven’t given up on crowdsourced translations (I don’t mean crowdfunded), I must be a communist or something…)

Chapter 21

Xant: This was tl'd by Elephant No.5 yet again.

Chapter 21 – Qualifying Day 1, Swordsman Corps

General Audience Area (Chie POV)

I was now watching the Swordsman Corps matches with Claude, Alice, and her three friends.

"Oh, that blonde swordswoman is quite good."

"Did you know? I heard that she enlisted sometime this year, but she had talent and was quickly promoted to a squad captain."

"Certainly, she is quite agile. It seems like she does not have any wasted movements, but there is still a ways to go."
)(TL:not sure about this line.「確かに、中々の身のこなし。変なクセも無いようですし、まだまだ伸びますね」)

""""…""""

Claude, Alice, and I complimented the swordswoman while watching the match.
Next to us, Alice's three friends continued to watch in silence.
After I greeted the girls, they recovered from their shock, but continued to stay silent.

"But Black, seeing you hold a pastry in one hand while in your Black Knight appearance is extremely weird."

Claude commented on my situation.
He just called me 'Black' when we were outside.
Certainly, I also thought that I looked weird when I ate sweet fruit crepes with this appearance.

"Isn't it fine? I wanted to eat something sweet after exercising."

When tired, eat sweet things.

“Also, I don’t want to hear that from you, Claude.”

The fact that he was munching showed that he was conscious of it.

“You…so defiant…Anyways, I didn’t know that you like sweet things.”

Claude said while amazed.

“Fufu, I know Black Knight-sama goes to the city two to three times a month to buy sweets.”

Claude and I were both surprised, in different ways.

“Wait?! Why do you know that, Alice?”

“Ha? That’s what you do on your holidays?”

Alice smiled on seeing our reactions.

No, wait a minute.
On my holidays, I would leave the castle alone while wearing my armor, enter a street with no people, release my armor while wearing a robe underneath, and then enter the café like that!

“Black Knight-sama, you will not be able to fool me with just that level of disguise, you know.”

I felt cold sweat appear as Alice told me that with a smile.
As expected, this castle’s employees were scary!

“You…wanted to eat sweets so much that you wore a disguise?”

Claude’s shoulders shook as he tried to stifle his laughter.
Therefore…

—Beshi

“OUCH!”

…I hit the back of Claude’s head with an open hand.

“Black, what are you doing!”

“Shut up! Don’t laugh at my secret pleasure!”

“Secret or not, why does a Knight Captain like you need to be shady about it?”

“It can’t be helped, right? If I wear armor, the other guests won’t be able to settle down!”

“Wait! Even if you kept your armor on, did you think you could enter quietly if you posed as a normal customer?”

“Of course! If possible, I want to chat with as many people as I can while I eat cake.

“I definitely didn’t want to know that.”

Claude and I continued arguing, without noticing that Alice and the other spectators were gathering around us.

Alice POV

“Oh this again? Master Black and Claude.”

“Haha! As usual, they have a good relationship!”

“Ah, I have seen this before, while shopping around the Fountain Square.”

“This won’t stop for at least 30 minutes.”

The peanut gallery watched the exchange between the Black Knight and Claude, like it was an everyday thing.
For them, it was a familiar sight.

“Huh? No one is surprised to see this?”

Karen asked with hesitation.
Lorna and Ashe had the same reaction as Karen.

“Oya~, did you guys not know?”

A plump and kind auntie near the girls spoke up.
She had brown hair, a brown shawl, a dark green shirt, and a long brown skirt.
The three people turned to face the woman in response.

“After Master Black defeated Fafnir, we occasionally saw this kind of scene. At first, I was surprised and thought that something important was about to happen, but nothing happened, and they reconciled and got along again.”

She said while remembering the scene with a wry smile.

“Now the people on the shopping street always watch it.”

The three girls just listened to her while feeling amazement.

“What about that blonde person? Do you all know him?”

Ashe asked the auntie.

“Yeah, that person is quite a spectacular swordsman.”

“Right?”

“”””…”””

After about 30 minutes of bickering, the two people went back to watching the tournament as if nothing had happened.
Three people were looking at them.
The peanut gallery returned to their original seats to watch the match, after making sure that the bickering had stopped.
As usual, one side started cheering.

“You see, there is nothing to worry about.”

“!? What is it, Alice?”

The Black Knight heard me.

“No, I was just worried about the exchange between the two of you.”

The Black Knight nodded after hearing those words.

“Sorry, please don’t mind it. It’s just the usual.”

The Black Knight told me that it was nothing.
However, that wouldn’t be possible if it wasn’t normal.

“Ku, Black Knight-sama is really close to the commoners, isn’t he?”

Lorna asked.

“Oh, I was originally a commoner. Protecting the country and getting along with the people is just normal.”

Karen was surprised to hear this reply and asked another question.

“Duke-sama is a commoner?”

The Black Knight tilted his head.

“Duke or not, it doesn’t matter, right? To begin with, the aristocracy is supposed to work for the country and the people. That is why I think it is important to have proper communication with both the nobles and the commoners. There is nothing weird about that, right?”

“…Because you say things like that, you became a sworn enemy to part of the aristocracy.”

Claude replied to the Black Knight.

I thought about the Black Knight’s opinions on the way of the nobles.
Brother was also a commoner who rose to the position of a Baron. However, because he originally had a close relationship with the locals, he believed that the commoners were more important than the nobles.
For the Black Knight, though, nobility and commoners were all equals.
Like Claude said, this would attract the hatred of some of the nobility, but I also agreed with this way of thinking.

After hearing this, the three girls stayed silent.
These three were still showing faces of disbelief.
How should I put it? Hardheads?

“Did I say something strange?”

“You are fine like that.”

“Huh?”

Claude patted the confused Black Knight’s right shoulder with his left hand.
The Black Knight was still unable to understand.
As I looked at the Black Knight, I had a strong desire to continue following her until the end.

Finals – Arena, Adelbert POV

I, Adelbert Abercrombie, was currently facing the Swordsman Corps Vice Captain in the finals.

A handsome man with red hair and a height of 185 Kuameito stood across

from me.
He was dressed in silver plate mail and held a wooden broadsword.
Basically, he was a powerhouse heavy hitter.
As the sky started to turn dark, the mages around began casting ‘Light’.
For a moment, the general audience became noisy in a certain area. I wonder what happened?

“Well then, both participants, get ready!”

On the referee’s cue, both of us got ready.

“Now then…Start!”

—Dat-su

We both advanced on the cue, and the sound of clashing wooden swords rang out.
It seemed like our blades were sharper, compared to four years ago.

“Dean, it looks like you have improved a bit.”

“I am honored by your compliment.”

The Vice Captain Dean said as he was pushed back a bit.
Just as he was being pressed, he jumped to make some distance.

“It is because I was trained by the Knight Captain. If I do not improve, the Knight Captain will get angry.”

Dean said as he stood up straight.

Six months ago, that Black Knight appeared.
He appeared suddenly, out of nowhere, and became the Knight Captain and Royal Knight.
He was also given the position of Duke, and the aristocratic red cloak. Not only that, his position rose above mine, leaving my pride in shreds.
That was why, the first time I met him directly, I tried to use sarcasm to get him to understand our viewpoint. I was unsuccessful.
The Black Knight pulled back the hand I had been holding, and then punched me in the face at an incredible speed.
I had not understood what had happened.

I mean, it was impossible to believe that this kind of person was the Knight Captain.
I did not want to follow him.
After that, Adolf and Brandon got beaten up as well.
I wanted to believe that it was a nightmare.
The Black Knight who was reflected in my eyes at that time was a monster.
When the Black Knight came closer to me, I raised a pathetic voice.
He grabbed me by the collar and yelled at me.

Honestly, that was my first time experiencing something like that.
I, who had been born into a large noble family and had not lost until then, thought that standing above the people was common sense for human beings.
Esteemed Father and Mother had also taught me that.

However, this Black Knight yelled at that me with an extremely threatening attitude.
It was the first time I had experienced such fear…
…and most of all, surprise.

"Conrad is unrelated to the problem between us!"

I had received those words in shock.

I had not understood the meaning of getting angry for others.
Moreover, attaching that disgraceful nickname, 'Stupid Swordsman', had made me hate him even more.
I had thought that it would be great if he disappeared.
However, everyone else was attracted to the Black Knight.
The men listened to his advice and trained every day.

Then there was the kidnapping incident.
The case that went on for two years was resolved in about a month. The dragon, which a country could not be guaranteed to beat despite using their entire military strength, was defeated by this one person.
This was too unreasonable.
At first, I could not accept the Black Knight.
However, I have now accepted him!

"Hah!"

I attacked Dean.

“Gh!”

The attack forced Dean to try to maintain his balance.
I took advantage of this and continued to attack.
I slashed quickly, from different angles.
Dean had certainly become much stronger, but he was still weaker than me.
Also, if I did not win this, I could not fight the Black Knight.
Even if I admit that he is strong, I still hate him!
I know it is my childish pride, but I still want to beat him!
To do that, I must absolutely win this match!

“HAA!”

—Gan!

I passed Dean’s broadsword and thrust at Dean’s torso.
The impact blew Dean backwards.

—- Crash*

The sound of the wooden sword falling echoed.

“Winner! Adelbert! The Swordsman Corps champion is Adelbert Abercrombie!”

—Waaaaa!

Cheers rose from the audience at the referee’s declaration.
After listening to the declaration, I left the arena without worrying about the fallen Dean.
That was why I didn’t notice.
My thrust had dented Dean’s armor and he fainted, his eyes white.
I only found out the next day.

Military Officials Dedicated Seating (Conrad POV)

“…He was carried away.”

“…He was actually taken away.”

“…Carried…”

“It is true that he got taken away.”

“I’m…sorry…”

Brandon, Adolf, Celestia, and I had bitter faces.
Amy was apologizing in tears.

“Finally a victim…”

Celestia murmured, while becoming pale.
We understood the feeling.
We were wondering if a victim would appear or not throughout the match.
At last, in the finals, a victim appeared…the Swordsman Corps Vice Captain.

“Tomorrow is Celestia’s and my turn. Fix that magic reinforcement quickly!”

Adolf drew closer to Amy and begged her in a cold sweat.
I thought to myself:
I’m glad that I’m exempted from the qualifying rounds!
While I thought that it was unfair for the other captains, it was better than hurting the other subordinates with that ridiculous weapon.
In order to ensure that the wooden weapon used in the qualifying rounds was safe, we carefully examined the spell while forgoing sleep.

Chie’s POV

“I wonder if Dean is alright?”

“Well, he is the vice captain, so he should be okay?”

We journeyed into noble territory to walk Alice’s three friends home.
Apparently, these three were born nobles.
Why did they go to a servant school?

“”””…”””

Even now, they wouldn’t speak.
I still don’t think I said anything strange a while ago?

“Um…Black Knight-sama…”

The silent Ashe started to speak.

“What?”

I answered normally, but she looked down and winced.
Ugh. Was I really that scary?

“Um…why do you think nobles and commoners are the same?”

Ashe asked as she looked downwards.
Her brows seemed to furrow a bit.
Claude and Alice had the same expression.
I thought it was a funny question.

“…Based on what you say, you seem to look down on commoners.”

I said in the usual serious and deep voice of the Black Knight.
The trio’s faces started to pale.

“No, I didn’t mean it like that…I mean that the nobility all have higher positions and identities, so the priority is usually given to nobles…”

As I listened to Ashe, I thought about it again.
Aristocracy looked down on commoners.

“The different way of identifying themselves certainly plays a role. That is true. However, in terms of priorities, I think it changes depending on the situation.”

“Huh?”

Ashe looked like she couldn’t understand what I meant.

This was the stereotypical way of thinking until now.
It was especially true for nobles like her.
We are great because we are nobles.
Therefore, commoners are an inferior existence.
Thanks to nobles like these, commoners like Aaron-san started to hate nobles.
However, this way of thinking was wrong.
The demons had begun to move. Humans had to help each other.
Nobles could abandon commoners. However, the reverse was also true.
In order to prevent that from happening, steps had to be taken to change it, one

at a time.
That was why I told the girls the value of each and every human being.

“We humans are all equal, except for our being born into different situations. There are also people like Conrad and me, who were born commoners and became nobles. This is one of the reasons I do not treat them as mere ‘commoners’. We nobles are supposed to work for the sake of protecting them. Everyone lives by supporting each other, even if they aren’t aware of it.

That is why I have to respect the commoners. Without them, we can’t live. Don’t you guys go to a servant school? I might not be convincing, but how about looking at the outside world, instead of just the aristocracy. If you look at humans everywhere, I’m sure that you will improve in your jobs.”

“““…”””

They stayed silent after listening to my words.

While it might be difficult, there is no other way to get the girls to believe that. While it might not be good to impose the values of my original world onto them, as long as I am staying here, I will try to make this a good country.
While I am the only one thinking about it now, I hope there will be others thinking about the future of the country.

It would be difficult.
As difficult as moving the world.
After all, it was something very simple.
Even then, when one person moved forward, everyone else would move to follow.
That was one of the Black Knight’s jobs.

Claude POV

Equality, huh?

After sending the three girls home, I bid farewell to Chie and the rest. I then returned to a rented apartment in the commoner area.
It was slightly run down, but that suited me just fine.

It was a room with the minimum amount of furniture.

I thought about Chie's words of wisdom in this room.
I had never thought about commoner and noble equality.
Chie and Conrad were different. Until I heard those words earlier, I thought aristocracy should look down on commoners.
Another possible reason, that was the kind of world I lived in during my time as an assassin.
If I had met Chie earlier, perhaps I would never have done such a crappy job.
When I looked at her, I could only feel embarrassed.
Saying that kind of thing should be reality.
Talking about that kind of future as if it was something so simple.
Seriously, what kind of country did you grow up in?!
I have heard stories about her family, but I had never heard stories of her country.

……

Ah, whatever. If she wants to change this country, then allow me to help.
It might be something that I have to do.
In order to walk together with my one best friend.

– To be continued